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ABSTRACT

Family life is the focus of this sixth volume in a series containing the proceedings of the 1983 Australian Family Research Conference. The papers are organized under two major sections: Children and Families and Family Environments. Papers and authors included are: "Family Conflict and Child Competence" (Gay Ochiltree and Paul Amato), "Me in My Family: A Comparative Study of Young Children's Descriptions of Their Intra-Family Interactions" (Lorraine Riach), "Neighbourhood Quality and Child Adjustment" (A. Burns and R. Homel), "The Effects of Children on Family Life in New Zealand and Australia" (Anne Meade, Margaret Rosemergy, and Raylee Johnston), "A Comparison of Attitudes to Childrearing of Parents of Handicapped and Non-Handicapped Children" (Roger J. Rees), "The Impact of Changing Patterns of Family Living Including Unemployment on Identity Formation in Late Adolescence" (Betsy Wearing and Deirdre James), "The Contribution of Longitudinal Studies to Family Research" (Ken Fogelman), "Women Workers on Roster: Some Implications for Family Life" (Hilary Rumley), "Living on the Land: Family Decision Making and Farm Production" (Russel A. Craig and Ann K. Killen), and "Cohabitation and Marriage: Family Environments in Formal and Informal Contexts" (Sotirios Sarantakos). (RM)

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AUSTRALIAN FAMILY RESEARCH CONFERENCE

Held at Burgmann College, Australian National University, Canberra, 23-25 November 1983

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VOLUME VI

Family Life

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- Volume III: Marital adjustment and breakdown
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- Volume V: Support Networks
- Volume VI: Family life
- Volume VII: Closing address and index

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Family conflict and child competence

Gay Ochiltree & Paul Amato
Institute of Family Studies

Increasing numbers of Australian children are experiencing the breakdown of their parents' marriage and eventual separation and/or divorce. In 1954 there were 8235 children whose parents had divorced (ABS, Demography, 1966). By 1971 the number had increased to 18 451 and in 1976, the first year of the new Family Law Act, the number jumped to 73 645 (ABS, Divorce Australia, 1981). All told between 1976 and 1981 there were 325 704 children under 18 who had experienced the divorce of their parents. This is approximately 7.3 per cent of the current child population under 18 years of age (Edgar & Headlam, 1982).

There are also a large but unknown number of separations which occur without going through the legal procedure of divorce. The latest estimated figure for Australian children living in one-parent households is 427 000. In almost one third of one-parent households, 30.3 percent, the parents are separated only (ABS, Australian Families, 1982).

Many separated and divorced parents go on to remarry or establish de facto relationships. Thus, the one-parent family for many is a temporary and short lived form of the family, while for others it may be permanent or of long duration. Recent figures from the Australian Bureau of Statistics indicate that 4.7 per cent of all 'married couple' families are in a de facto relationship and in a little over one third of these de facto families (35.7%) there are dependent children. In 14 per cent of two-parent families, at least one partner has been married before and a little over a quarter of these remarried families (26.6%) have children present from previous marriages (ABS, Australian Families, 1982).

Bumpass and Rindfuss (1978) in a discussion of the American experience of the impact of marital disruption on children make a point that is equally true of Australia in light of the increase in divorce rates.

> As a consequence of these increases in both the rates of marital disruption and the involvement of children in this experience, transition between families of orientation is likely soon to become nearly as common as continuous socialisation in a single family...it is imperative that we discover more about the correlates of inter-marital and multiple-family experience, especially as they infringe upon the lives of children (Bumpass & Rindfuss, 1978: 2).

Conflict

When families break down and parents separate it is often as a result of ongoing unresolved conflict. In the period of marriage breakdown and separation most families experience conflict, tension and turmoil even when this has not been part of the previous pattern of interaction, as it is rare that marriages break down by mutual agreement. However, in the majority of families, conflict associated with separation and divorce is resolved with the passing of time although for a few it may continue indefinitely. In an unknown number of marriages parents stay together 'for the good of the children' regardless of the level of ongoing conflict and associated turmoil.

Stepfamilies are traditionally regarded as difficult with associated images of wicked stepmothers and miserable stepchildren. Much of the existing literature regarding stepfamilies consists of discussions of the complexities of step-parenting (Visher & Visher, 1978; Walker & Messinger, 1979). Jones (1978) points out that for adolescents the remarriage of a parent may be more disruptive than divorce, leading to competition for the attention of the natural parent and intense conflict in the family.

Few studies have looked directly at the effect of family conflict on children, preferring to link particular child groups (e.g., delinquents) with family type, or to look at the effect of 'father absence' and/or divorce on child adjustment or educational achievement (Levitin, 1979). However, there are many indications that conflict is an important aspect of family processes. (In this paper we are not arguing that conflict should not occur in families, as clearly a certain amount of conflict is inevitable and perhaps even beneficial. Rather, we are looking at conflict where it is perceived as being excessive and maladaptive.)

Nye (1957) tested the hypothesis that the adjustment of children in broken and unbroken but unhappy homes did not differ significantly. He found that adolescents in one-parent families were better adjusted to parents and had less delinquent behaviour and psychosomatic illness than those in unhappy two-parent homes. In adjustment to school and church there were no differences.

More recent research on the effects of separation/divorce on children indicates that the distress suffered at the separation of parents is associated as much with the accompanying turmoil and conflict as with the actual separation (Hetherington, 1979; Longfellow, 1979). Jacobsen (1978) with a sample of families 12 months after separation found a positive association between levels of parent hostility in the previous two weeks and child maladjustment.

In a retrospective study of children aged between nine and 28 years whose parents had divorced six to ten years before, Rosen (1977) asked whether they felt their parents should have stayed together for their sake. Most of the children stated strongly that their parents should not have stayed together as they saw the conflict as extremely destructive.

Related research indicates a link between child disturbance and marital quality in two-parent families (Porter & O'Leary, 1980; Kotler & Hammond, 1981). Porter and O'Leary found overt marital hostility correlated with behavioural problems in boys but not in girls. Ellison (1983) found no difference in the psychosocial adjustment of children in two-parent and divorced families but found that ratings of parent harmony were positively related to adjustment among children of divorced parents. Similarly, Rashke and Rashke (1979) compared the self-concept of children in one-parent and two-parent familes and found no significant difference between the two. However, perceived family conflict was associated with lowered self-concept among children.

Rutter (1979) pointed out that while past studies have linked parental separation and divorce with delinquency and anti-social behaviour in children, parental death is not linked. This supports his argument that it is not so much the loss of a parent or the distress caused by the loss of a parent that leads to behaviour problems and delinquency but the disturbed interpersonal relationships in the family. Hess and Camara (1979) found that information about family processes (affective relationships and level of harmony) was more useful in predicting child outcomes, in relation to social relationships and work styles at school, than knowledge of family type. However, they also indicated that lack of harmony between parents does not necessarily determine the quality of parenting, although it is important.

As the potential for conflict exists in all families, the aim of this paper is to present some preliminary data on the effect of conflict on children in three family types: intact two-parent families, one-parent familes, and stepfamilies. This sub-study is part of a larger project which is concerned with childrens' perceptions of their families and the development of competence. The question we wish to address in this analysis is: to what extent does severe and pervasive family conflict affect three aspects of competence - reading ability, everyday skills, and self-concept - among children living in intact families, one-parent families, and stepfamilies?

Competence

Competence is defined in the Concise Oxford Dictionary (1976) as 'ability (to do, for a task); sufficiency of means for a living.' As such, it covers a broad range of attributes and skills. For purposes of this study, 'competence' means intelligence in the broadest sense, knowing how to act in specific situations rather than isolated knowledge, being able to change the environment as well as adapt to it, having the skills to cope with living in the particular local environment and in contemporary society. At an emotional level it means having the self confidence to try things with an expectation, if not of immediate success, of having the confidence to try again with the expectation of eventual success (Connolly & Bruner, 1974).

Edgar (1971) argues that the resources for the development of competence are socially distributed and include such things as education, economic resources, access to information, and language related ability. He goes on to point out that certain competencies '...are more highly valued than others by those who control central social institutions' (1971: 4). Possession of valued or necessary competencies and positive experiences in social interaction lead to the development of a self image as competent and efficacious in mastery of the environment. Children who do not develop the valued competencies or develop them inadequately are less likely to maintain a positive self image in interaction with members of the dominant groups in society. This especially applies to the situation in schools and later when seeking employment. Nevertheless, some of these children may be viewed as competent in their own family or social group.

The first and most important group in the development of competence is the family. Very early in life babies actively attempt to master their environment , although limited in their physical development. When the parents are responsive to the infant's actions a mutually satisfying relationship develops leading to a sense of efficacy and mastery in the child. Brewster-Smith (1969) describes such parent-child relationships as benign circles of socialisation. However, '...the non-supportive parent tends to create an environment which is not responsive to the child's initial and continuing efforts at producing an effect upon the environment. In such environments, a sense of competency does not develop adequately' (Roilins & Thomas, 1979: 351). Such relationships are described by Brewster-Smith (1969) as developing into a vicious circle of socialisation.

A sense of self is developed in response to the individual's perception of how others feel about the self, according to G. H. Mead. The first 'generalised other' of the pre-school child is the family. As the child grows the generalised other expands '...to include the peer group, extra-familial adult authorities, and progressively, the entire complex structure of society at large as the individual is related to it' (Brewster-Smith, 1969: 237). Thus, the values of significant others firstly, followed by members of groups outside the home, impinge on the sense of efficacy and competence of the child. The child's self image is related to experience of success and failure in the eyes of others.

Families, in helping develop competence, are giving the child a broad education for life. To be competent is to mature as an independent individual able to take care of personal needs, capable of independent living, and able to interact effectively with other people in the community. Competence will vary to some extent according to the social context in which the individual lives but some abilities are necessary for people in all walks of life. However, some disenfranchised lower status families or families living in poverty may communicate to their children their own tenuous expectations of success in regard to skills associated with the dominant class (Brewster-Smith, 1969; Connolly & Bruner, 1974; Kagan, 1979).

Another important aspect of competence with those involved in the socialisation of children at home, school, or elsewhere, was pointed out by Brewster-Smith (1969) when he stated 'The wise nurturance of competence in the young would seem to call for a deliberate progressive sharing of power and responsibility as the growing competence of the child enables him to use it' (1969: 237).

Measures of competence

As competence is such a broad and complex concept, it was decided that three separate aspects of competence would be measured in this study. Each was selected because it represented one of the rather different abilities which are needed to become a competent individual in our society.

1 Reading A reading test was chosen as a measure of educational competence because in our system of education, reading is the

key to progress. Children who cannot read well cannot succeed in most subjects and have limited choice when they seek employment. A CLOZE reading test was used as a measure of reading ability rather than a standardised test, as it includes more language and reading related variables than other objective measures. Most standardized tests focus on a few aspects of reading, such as word recognition and comprehension, and some only examine one aspect (Teale & Rowley, 1979). CLOZE includes semantic and syntactic knowledge, graphic cues, contextual cues, and the background knowledge of the student, all of which are part of reading ability.

2 Self concept The second measure of competence was a self concept scale which was used to assess children's feelings about themselves. A child with a positive self image is more likely to have the confidence to tackle new tasks and to cope with failure or change. The Piers-Harris Children's Self Concept Scale (CSCS) was selected as it covers the two age groups of the children involved in this study and was designed primarily as a research instrument (Piers & Harris, 1969, 1977). Although this scale was normed and standardised in the United States, the items used appeared to be relevant and applicable to Australian children.

3 Everyday skills Finally, a check list of skills needed for taking care of personal needs in everyday life was developed. These skills ranged from such things as making the bed to using a washing machine, and are the skills that are gradually learned throughout childhood and adolescence. They are necessary if

the individual is to live an autonomous and independent life as an adult. The skills on this list, however, are rarely learned at school. A similar check list of everyday skills used by Zill and Peterson (1982) in the United States was found to yield theoretically meaningful results.

METHOD

Sampli

The aim of the study was to obtain approximately 400 pairs of interviews from children and parents. Of the 400 interview pairs, half were to be obtained from Year 3 students and half were to be obtained from Year 10 students. Furthermore, approximately half were to involve intact families and half were to involve one-parent families and stepfamilies. While selecting Year 3 and Year 10 students is relatively straightforward, the selection of one-parent families and stepfamilies is problematic, since their proportion in the population is somewhat small and no prior information exists about their location. Therefore, the sampling procedure itself had to locate these families. The sampling design thus required two phases. In the first phase, Year 3 and Year 10 students at Victorian schools were screened to gather information on their family composition. In the second phase, students were sampled from this group to achieve approximately equal numbers of intact and non-intact families.

The target population consisted of Year 3 students and Year 10 students in Victorian primary and secondary schools. A sample of 40 primary schools was selected from the ACER sampling frame, with proportional representation of State, Catholic, and Independent schools. A similar sample of 40 secondary schools was selected with proportional representation of State high, State technical, Catholic, and Independent schools. Schools were selected using a random-start, constant-interval method separately for each school stratum. Matched replacement schools, from the same area, were also selected for each school in the sample.

School principals were contacted in September, 1982. Of the 40 primary schools selected, 35 agreed to participate. Five replacement schools were contacted, and four of these agreed to participate, resulting in a final sample of 39 primary schools (26 State, 10 Catholic, and 3 Independent). Of the secondary schools contacted, 38 agreed to participate. Two replacement schools were contacted, and both agreed to participate. The final sample of 40 secondary schools consisted of 20 State high, 9 State technical, 7 Catholic, and 4 Independent schools.

Screening data were collected in September and October, 1982 from each school. One class was selected from each school for screening, with a preference given to non-streamed and non-composite classes. The screening questionnaire contained a number of demographic items, including questions on the child's family composition. This questionnaire was administered in the classroom by an Institute field worker and the class's regular teacher. Altogether, 929 Year 3 students and 857 Year 10 students were screened.

It became apparent after a preliminary scanning of the screening data that the number of students from one-parent and stepfamilies was low (12.7% of Year 3 and 14.9% of Year 10 students) and that a larger pool of non-intact families was needed to achieve the desired number of phase two interviews. Accordingly, it was decided to screen a second sample of primary and secondary students. Time constraints required that the target population be restricted to primary and secondary schools with relatively high proportions of non-intact families. A list of schools with large numbers of non-intact families (as indicated by the School Priorities Index) was obtained from the Supplementary Grants Committee of the Victorian State Education Department. In addition, information on Catholic schools was obtained from the Catholic Education office. Seventeen primary (15 State and 2 Catholic) and 17 secondary schools (9 State High, 5 State Technical, and 1 Catholic) were selected from the combined State-Catholic lists, and school principals were contacted in February, 1983. All 34 schools agreed to participate, and a total of 422 primary and 377 secondary students were screened. (However, because a new academic year had started, Year 4 and Year 11 students were screened, to maintain the comparability of the first and second sample.) This procedure resulted in a substantially larger pool of one-parent and stepfamilies (27.0% primary, 22.5% secondary) from which to sample for the phase two interviews.

All students from non-intact families in each class were included in the final sample. Students from intact families were selected randomly from each class using a random-start constant-interval method of selection. Letters were sent directly to the parent(s) of selected students, explaining the study and soliciting their co-operation. Interviews were requested of the child and one parent in the household. Altogether, 1022 families were contacted. Initial non-responding parents were later contacted by telephone to again solicit their participation. A final sample of 402 families was achieved, yielding an overall response rate of 39.3 per cent.

The low response rate can partly be accounted for by the fact that two interviews were required from each family (parent and child). Hence, a refusal from either party counted as refusal for the entire family. Response rates varied across subgroups, with somewhat higher levels of participation occurring among non-intact families, parents with higher status occupations,and Australian-born parents. Comparison of the final sample with Victorian population figures (1981 Census) revealed that the sample distribution of parents' occupations matched state figures well, with professional and administrative categories being somewhat over-represented and the trades and labour category being somewhat under-represented. The distribution of country of birth categories for parents indicated that the sample under-represented a number of migrant groups, especially Greeks and Italians. However, the distribution of primary and secondary school students across the various school strata matched state figures very closely. Although some biases were present in the sample, it was decided not to weight the data to compensate for under-representation due to nonresponse, since the primary purpose of the study was to examine relationships between family variables rather than estimate population parameters (Lansing & Morgan, 1971: 223-236; Sonquist & Dunkelberg, 1977: 202-203).

Survey instrument

The children's interview schedule consisted of 165 questions designed to elicit information in 15 different areas, including the division of labour in the home, family relationships and environment, perceptions of parents (and step-parents), decision making and rules, friends, interests, and school. The interviews were conducted either in the child's home or at school. The interviews ranged in length from one half hour to 2¼ hours, with a median length of one hour. The parent's interview schedule consisted of 155 questions designed to elicit information in a variety of areas, including the parent's relationship with the child, aspirations for the child, perceptions of the child, the child's competence and health, the family environment and relationships, the parent's marital relationship, values concerning children, and basic demographic information. The interviews ranged in length from 35 minutes to 3½ hours, with a median length of 1¼ hours. Both the child's and the parent's interview contained a large number of open-ended questions, as well as questions answered on standardised rating scales. A team of 18 interviewers collected the data. All were given extensive training in interviewing children and adults before beginning.

Competence measures

Three measures of competence were administered to all children in the sample: a CLOZE reading test, the Piers-Harris Self Concept Scale for Children, and a skills checklist. Each will be described in turn.

CLOZE Reading Test The CLOZE test required students to fill in a number of missing words in a passage so that a story made sense to them. Different passages of relevant standard were used with primary and secondary students. The passage for Year 3 students formed a complete story as at that age most reading is of narrative. The passage for Year 10 students was a more abstract piece similar to passages in textbooks used at this level. A standard CLOZE procedure with every fifth word deleted was used for Year 10, resulting in 50 blanks. A simpler version with every tenth word deleted was used for Year 3, resulting in 33 blanks (Hasegawa, 1980). A correct response was counted for each blank successfully completed. Tests for both primary and secondary school students were scored out of 100. Both passages were trialed and modified in a number of primary and secondary schools before use in the main study.

CLOZE tests were scored by a team of four coders. To establish inter-coder reliability, 30 CLOZE tests were selected at random from the larger sample (15 primary and 15 secondary) and were scored independently by each coder. The four coder's scores were then inter-correlated across the 30 CLOZE tests. The resulting product-moment correlations ranged from .94 to .98, with an average correlation (root mean square) of .96. Furthermore, the distribution of scores for each coder had virtually identical means and standard deviations. Thus, a high degree of inter-coder reliability was achieved for this measure.

The final distribution of scores for primary school students ranged from 0 to 99, with a mean of 70.4 and a standard deviation of 22.8. The CLOZE scores of secondary school students ranged from 6 to 95 with a mean of 68.9 and a standard deviation of 15.1. Both distributions were slightly negatively skewed.

The CLOZE reading scores correlated moderately highly with both parent's and student's ratings of their academic standing (5 = at the top of the class, 1 = at the bottom of the class). For the primary school sample, CLOZE reading scores yielded a product-moment correlation of .57 ($p < .001$) with parents' ratings and .41 ($p < .001$) with students' ratings. For the secondary sample, the corresponding correlations were .36 ($p < .001$) and .33 ($p < .001$). These data provide some support for the notion that the CLOZE test provides a general measure of reading comprehension and reflects general academic ability.

Children's Self Concept Scale The Children's Self Concept Scale (CSCS) was developed by Piers and Harris (1969, 1977) and consists of 80 statements about the self which the child responds to using a 'yes' or 'no' format. Responses are equally weighted and summed to provide a total score which can be used as a global measure of self-esteem. The reading ability of about Year 3 level is necessary to complete the CSCS. However, it was administered orally, and individually to the Year 3 and Year 4 students in the sample. Year 10 students filled out the scale themselves, except when there was any doubt about their reading ability. In these cases the interviewer read the items to the individual.

In the present study, the scores of primary school students ranged from 18 to 77, with a mean of 58.7 and a standard deviation of 11.9. For the secondary school students, the scores ranged from

9 to 78, with a mean of 56.5 and a standard deviation of 11.2. These means are somewhat lower than the means reported by Piers and Harris (1969) for their sample of 1183 North American school children used to norm the CSCS. However, the Australian means are well within the range of means reported for other North American samples (Piers & Harris, 1977). As noted by Piers and Harris, the distribution of scores for both primary and secondary students was somewhat negatively skewed.

To establish scale reliability, Kuder-Richardson-20 values were calculated for students at both grade levels. KR-20 is equivalent to coefficient alpha when the data are in dichotomous form, and is a measure of scale homogeneity or internal consistency which reflects the extent to which all items in the scale are measuring the same underlying construct. The reliability coefficients were .91 for primary school students and .90 for secondary students, indicating a high level of scale reliability.

Previous attempts to validate measures of self-esteem have generally yielded low to moderate correlations with the ratings of significant others. However, an attempt was made to assess the extent of agreement between childrens' CSCS scores and the ratings of their parents. As part of the larger study, parents were asked to rate their children on a number of personality and behavioural characteristics. Generally, it appeared to be the case that children who were rated more positively by their parents on a number of traits achieved higher scores on the CSCS. For example, among primary school students, CSCS scores were positively related to parents' ratings of the child as 'enthusiastic' ($r = .18$, $p < .05$) and 'a good student' ($r = .31$, $p < .001$), and were negatively related to parents' ratings of the child as 'easily confused' ($r = -.18$, $p < .05$), 'unable to concentrate or pay attention' ($r = -.27$, $p < .001$) and 'acts young for age' ($r = -.14$, $p < .05$). Among secondary students, CSCS scores were positively related to parents' ratings of the child as 'usually in a good mood' ($r = .22$, $p < .001$), 'responsible and helpful' ($r = .21$, $p < .001$), 'friendly and confident with people' ($r = .16$, $p < .05$), and 'a good student' ($r = .15$, $p < .05$). Thus, some support for the validity of the CSCS was obtained.

Skills Check List Children were given a check list of 20 'life skills' and were asked to indicate if they knew how to do each one. If they responded positively, they were asked to indicate how frequently they performed each skill on a five point scale (1 = never, 5 = often). The check list included items relating to household activities (e.g., making your bed, cleaning up you room) and more general skills (e.g., travelling by public transport, finding your way in the city). An attempt was made to strike a balance between traditional male sex role activities (e.g., hammering a nail) and traditional female sex role activities (e.g., minding a baby).

The skills check list was scored in two ways to provide somewhat different types of information. The first scoring procedure consisted of adding the number of 'yes' responses. This indicated the number of skills, out of 20, the child possessed. The second method of scoring involved adding the five-point ratings for each item. This score reflected not only skills knowledge, but skills performance as well. These two scores are referred to as 'Skills Knowledge' and 'Skills Performance'. Generally, the two methods of scoring correlated at a high level (r = .81 for primary school students, r = .60 for secondary school students), and yielded similar results. Hence, only the Skills Knowledge measure will be discussed in the remainder of this paper.

The scores on the Skills Knowledge measure ranged from 5 to 20 for the primary school students, with a mean of 14.0 and a standard deviation of 3.26. The scores of secondary school students ranged from 10 to 20 with a mean of 18.6 and a standard deviation of 1.6. The distribution of scores for the primary school sample was approximately normal. However, the distribution of scores for the secondary school sample was negatively skewed, with the mean being close to the top end of the scale. No significant differences were obtained between male and female students on this measure at either grade level.

The Skills Knowledge measure was found to have a reliability coefficient of .75 (KR-20) for the primary school sample, and .58 for the secondary school sample. The low reliability coefficient for the secondary school sample probably reflects the small amount of variance in the scores of this group. Combining the primary and secondary samples resulted in a reliability coefficient of .83.

The fact that the mean score for secondary school students was considerably higher than the mean score for primary school students provides direct, although somewhat obvious support for the validity of the Skills Knowledge measure. Across the entire sample, age yielded a product-moment correlation of .68 with Skills Knowledge ($p < .001$). Scores on this measure were also correlated with scores derived from an identical skills check list completed by each child's parent. Parents' ratings of their childrens' skills correlated with childrens' scores at .48 ($p < .001$) for primary school students and .44 ($p < .001$) for secondary school students. Across the entire sample, parents' and childrens' ratings correlated at .75 ($p < .001$).

Family conflict measure

Coders read through the complete transcripts of the parent-child interview pairs, paying particular attention to the responses to open-ended questions. On the basis of this reading, a short qualitative overview was written for each family. Each family was then rated for the presence of any noticeable and consistent pattern of conflict as revealed in the interview transcripts. For this purpose, three relationships were examined: between parents, between the mother and child interviewed, and between the father and child interviewed. Ratings were given on three-point scales: (1) no overt conflict or tension present in the relationship, (2) tension is present in the relationship, and (3) overt conflict is present in the relationship. Only conflict, or tension, which consistently appeared in a variety of places in the transcripts was recorded. Furthermore, conflict had to be overt, disruptive, and atypically high to be counted. As such, the majority of families received ratings of 1 for all relationship categories.

These ratings were therefore based upon an in-depth, qualitative analysis of a large amount of material for each family (the amount of time involved in reading the transcripts, writing the overview, and generating the conflict ratings averaged between 2 and 3 hours per family). It was hoped in this manner to produce conflict ratings which were more global and sensitive than would be obtained through simple rating scales completed by either parents or children. Furthermore, it was anticipated that this procedure would be less contaminated by social desirability concerns on the part of parents or children in responding to specific items.

Five different coders served in this capacity. To establish the degree of inter-coder reliability, 30 interview pairs were selected at random from the larger sample. These were read and coded by two coders each, with each of the five coders reading at least five sets of interviews. Averaging across all five coders, the rate of agreement for the appropriate conflict score (1, 2, or 3) was 90.8 per cent. Treating the conflict ratings as an ordinal scale allowed sets of ratings given by the first and second coder to be correlated. This resulted in a rank order correlation (Spearman's Rho) of .81 between the two sets of ratings. Hence, it appeared to be the case that independent observers were able to agree at a high level about the existence of tension, or overt conflict, in the interview transcripts.

An attempt was also made to provide cross-validation of this measure by comparing the conflict ratings with responses to a number of questions on the interview schedules. Rank order correlations between conflict ratings and six questions on the parent interview dealing with the quality of family life (rated on 5-point scales) revealed correlations ranging from -.14 to -.35, with a median correlation of -.24 ($p < .01$). Furthermore, correlations of conflict ratings with five questions on the child interview dealing with the quality of family life (rated on 3-point scales) ranged from -.14 to -.41, with a median correlation of -.27 ($p < .01$). Hence, the results of the qualitative assessment were consistent with information provided by more quantitative indices.

For the present study, the three sets of conflict ratings were combined to classify the families into three groups. The first group consisted of families where no source of conflict or tension was apparent in the interview transcripts (76% of families). The second group consisted of families where at least one major source of tension was present (14% of families). The third group consisted of families where at least one major source of overt conflict was present (10% of families). Constrasts between the second and third group of 'conflictual' families and the first group of families will be made in the remainder of this paper.

RESULTS

The first step in the analysis was to inter-correlate the three measures of child competence: CLOZE reading scores, self-esteem scores (CSCS), and Skills Knowledge scores. These product-moment correlations appear in Table 1. It is apparent that the three measures are not highly inter-correlated. Furthermore, the pattern of correlations is somewhat different in the primary and secondary school samples (for example, self-esteem scores correlated positively and significantly with CLOZE reading scores among the primary school students but not among the secondary school students). This is consistent with the assumption that the different measures of competence should be generally positively correlated (because they all measure the same general domain) but that the correlations should be weak (given that each measures a different dimension of the competence construct). Hence, it was decided not to combine the three dependent measures into a single multivariate analysis, but to analyze each competence measure separately.

Table 2 contains the mean scores of primary school students on each of the three competence measures, broken down by the three levels of family conflict. In relation to CLOZE reading scores, children from families seen as having either 'some tension' or 'overt conflict' scored lower than children from 'no conflict' families. In relation to self-esteem, high levels of family conflict appeared to be associated with considerably lower scores on the Piers - Harris scale. Finally, in relation to Skills Knowledge, it appeared that children from families marked by overtconflict (i.e., a conflict rating of 3) scored about two points higher than children from families with lower levels of conflict. Rank order correlations are also presented in Table 2. These reveal a marginally significant ($p < .10$) negative association between conflict and CLOZE reading scores, and a significant ($p < .001$) negative association between conflict and self-esteem. Furthermore, a positive (but not statistically significant) association was apparent between conflict and Skills Knowledge.

Table 3 contains mean scores for secondary students on each of the three competence measures, broken down by the three levels of family conflict. In relation to CLOZE reading scores, the relationship appeared to be curvilinear, with students from families in the middle group (some tension) having the lowest reading scores. This was reflected in a significant deviation from linearity ($F = 4.44$, $df = 1,201$, $p < .05$). In relation to self-esteem, family conflict appeared to be negatively associated with scores on the Piers-Harris scale. Finally, in relation to Skills Knowledge, the relationship again appeared to be curvilinear, with students from families in the middle group having the lowest mean score. Although the difference was slight, it resulted in a marginally significant deviation from linearity for this measure ($F = 3.23$, $df = 1,201$, $p < .10$). The rank order correlations revealed a marginally significant ($p < .10$) association between CLOZE reading scores and conflict (due mainly to the lower scores in the middle group), a stronger negative association between self-esteem scores and family conflict ($p < .001$), and a marginally significant ($p < .10$) negative association between Skills Knowledge and family conflict (due again to the slightly lower scores in the middle group).

It was anticipated that the effects of conflict on child competence would be mediated by family type. Therefore, the families were divided into three groups: intact families (n = 200), stepfamilies (n = 74), and one-parent families (n = 124). Four families in the sample consisted of children living with relatives, (usually grandparents) and were excluded from the analysis.

To assess the effect of family conflict on child competence within each family type, families with conflict ratings of 2 (some tension) or 3 (overt conflict) were combined to avoid unreliability associated with small cell sizes. Prior inspection of the category means for each family type revealed that this procedure did not essentially distort the pattern of results. The mean scores of primary and secondary school children on each of the three competence measures were then computed for low and high conflict families of each family type. Due to the large number of means generated by this procedure, the results have been summarized in a series of cell mean diagrams presented in Figures 1, 2, and 3.

Figure 1 contains the cell mean diagram for the CLOZE reading measure. Because different versions of the test were given to primary and secondary students, resulting in distributions with different means and standard deviations, Z scores for each group were computed by subtracting the group mean from each score and dividing the remainder by the group standard deviation. The resulting Z score distributions thus both had means of zero and standard deviations of one. This allowed the results from both the primary and secondary student samples to be plotted on the same figure.

It is apparent from Figure 1 that for most groups, CLOZE reading scores were lower in the conflictual families than in the families with lower levels of conflict. This trend, however, appeared to be strongest in the one-parent families, at both grade levels. The cell mean diagram for the self-esteem (CSCS) measure appears in Figure 2. In relation to this measure, it is clear that all six subject groups showed a consistent decrease in self-esteem in conflictual families.

Figure 3 contains the cell mean diagram for the Skills Knowledge measure. Several trends are apparent in these data. First, it is clear that secondary school students from all three family types had high levels of Skills Knowledge, regardless of the level of family conflict. However, while primary school children from intact families with low conflict scored relatively low on this measure compared to primary school children from stepfamilies and one-parent families, their level of knowledge increased in conflictual families to a level comparable to that of the other groups. Family conflict did not appear to have as strong an effect upon children from stepfamilies or one-parent families.

Table 4 contains rank order correlations between family conflict ratings and scores on the three competence measures for children form each of the three family types. These results reveal similar trends tc those observed in the cell mean diagrams. First, in relation to CLOZE reading scores, family conflict was negatively associated with competence in all family types and at all grade levels, but the effect only attained statistical significance among secondary school children from one-parent families. In relation to self-esteem, family conflict was again consistently negatively associated with competence. However, the effect appeared to be strongest among primary school children from stepfamilies.

The pattern of results in relation to Skills Knowledge was complex, exhibiting positive and negative associations with family conflict in different sub-groups. However, the relationship was only statistically significant among primary school children from intact families. This positive effect of conflict on Skills Knowledge is consistent with the trend observed in Figure 3.

DISCUSSION

It is apparent from this preliminary analysis that conflict affects the competence of primary school children in each of the three areas measured: reading ability, self-esteem, and skills knowledge. There were also effects on the competence of secondary school children, with the exception of the Skills Knowledge measure, where most children attained high scores regardless of circumstances. However, the effects of family conflict were complex, and differed according to the child's family type and age. Each of the three measures will be discussed in turn.

CLOZE reading test

The reading competence of primary school children was lower, overall, when there was 'some tension' or 'overt conflict' observed in the interview transcripts (see Table 2). However, the reading competence of secondary school children was lowest when there was 'some tension' rather than overt conflict (see Table 3). The explanation for this significant curvilinear relationship is not clear. However, it can be pointed out that reading is an active, cognitive process requiring concentration and retrieval of existing language and print knowledge (Hall & Ramig, 1978; Smith, 1978). While the reading process is still being acquired, more energy and concentration is required than when fluency has been achieved and reading is a habit. Younger children in primary school, who are still learning to read, are therefore more likely to be distracted by the anxiety and worry associated with even moderate levels of family conflict. Thus, while emotional turmoil may interfere with both attention and recall of needed knowledge in most primary school children, most secondary school children will be less affected because their reading is easier and more fluent. Indeed, fluent readers can blank out unpleasant experiences by reading, if they are inclined. This may account for the curvilinear relationship between reading scores and level of conflict at secondary level, in that some children may turn to reading as a way of avoiding family conflict if it becomes excessive.

When looking at the relationship between reading competence and family type at primary level (see Figure 1), it is clear that when conflict was not apparent, children in one-parent families scored somewhat lower than children in intact families, and that children in stepfamilies scored lowest of all. When there was family conflict, the reading scores of children from intact families decreased a small amount, the scores of children in stepfamilies remained at the same low level, and the scores of children in one-parent families dropped substantially. The reason for this decline in the reading scores of children in one-parent families is possibly associated with the effect of anxiety and worry on the reading process, as indicated earlier. However, it is also the case that in the present study, conflict in two-parent families might have involved either the parent-child or the parent-parent relationship, but in the one-parent families the source of conflict would necessarily have been the parent-child relationship. One aspect of a poor parent-child relationship might be that the parent is less likely to help the child with reading and school work, and to offer encouragement. With no other parent in the home to compensate, the effect on the child may be particularly debilitating. Children in one-parent families may also be especially vulnerable to conflict since they have fewer sources of emotional support in the home.

A similar decline was observed in the reading scores of secondary school children in one-parent families: while there was little difference between children from one-parent and intact families when there was no conflict, the reading scores of children from one-parent families were considerably lower than those of children from intact families when there was conflict (see Figure 1). Once again, the lower scores of these children may reflect anxiety or lack of parental interest and encouragement, as noted above.

The pattern of results for stepfamilies at both primary and secondary levels needs further attention. The reading scores of children in stepfamilies were lower than the scores of children in other family types and remained at the same low level regardless of conflict. This may be associated with the greater number of problems often encountered in stepfamilies (Fast & Cain, 1965; Jones, 1978; Visher & Visher, 1978; Walker & Messinger, 1979). On the other hand, it may be related to time spent with the natural parent and the amount of communication between them. Reading is a language skill which is learned initially through interaction with parents before going to school. Family breakdown may have originally occurred at a period of time when early reading and language skills were being developed, resulting in an impaired reading ability. However, the explanation is more likely linked to current family relationships, as children in one-parent families had a different pattern of results from children in stepfamilies. Patterns or interest in reading, parental assistance, parent-child communication, and time spent together need further investigation in relation to the development of reading competence.

Self-esteem

Children in all family types and at both age levels had lower self-esteem scores when there was family conflict. This finding supports those of Rashke and Rashke (1979) who found that perceived family conflict was associated with lowered self-esteem in children in both one and two-parent families.

Among primary school children, those most negatively affected by family conflict were in one-parent families and stepfamilies. While there was little difference in mean scores in the 'no conflict' families, children in stepfamilies and one-parent families had considerably lower scores in 'high conflict' families (see Figure 2). This may be related to the fact that younger children are very dependent on their parents and family and are less involved with support outside the family. These children have already been through the conflict and upheaval associated with the separation of their parents, and continuing conflict or a renewal of family conflict (whatever the cause) may make them particularly vulnerable. In this context, Rutter (1971, 1979) and Anthony (1978) have argued that multiple stressors are more detrimental to children than a single isolated incident.

Children need a safe stable base from which to move out and explore the world, and to which they can retreat. When conflict makes the family less comforting and safe, negative experiences in school and neighbourhood may be felt more keenly and reinforce negative feelings arising in the family.

The situation may be different for adolescents. Adolescents have greater peer support than younger children and are at a stage of cognitive development where they can understand and reflect on family behaviour in a way which is beyond the capacity of younger children. Although conflict may affect them negatively, other factors can mediate the effects to a certain extent. However, in the present study, family conflict was negatively associated with the self-esteem scores of secondary school children in all three family types. It is also interesting to note that, as was the case with primary school children, secondary school children from stepfamilies and one-parent families scored lower on self-esteem than secondary school children from intact families.

Changes of school and neighbourhood experienced by parents who have separated, divorced, or remarried may leave children, at either age level, with few supports outside the family. However, in the pilot for this study, it appeared to be adolescents who indicated that they had special difficulty in making close friends because of changes of house and school following parental separation (Unpublished paper, 1983). These changes might partially account for the lower self-esteem scores of children in one-parent families and stepfamilies.

Skills knowledge

A greater knowledge of everyday life skills was apparent in primary school children from [illegible] marked by 'overt conflict' (see Table 2). It appears that primary school children in conflictual families have to do more for themselves. When the relationship between skills knowledge, conflict, and family type was examined, however, it turned out to be children in intact families rather than one-parent or stepfamilies, who had the higher scores when there was conflict. In comparison, the scores for one-parent and stepfamilies changed very little (see Figure 3). Parents in intact families are less likely to have any real need for help from their children and may not encourage them to take on extra household or personal tasks, finding it easier and more convenient to do things themselves. However, when conflict occurs and parents are more distracted, children may find that they have to learn to do things for themselves.

Single parents, however, are usually overloaded with parenting and household tasks as there is only one person doing the work of two. Therefore, primary children living with a single parent are more likely to have been encouraged to look after themselves and assist in the household (Weiss, 1979, 1981). If the parent works, help from the children is even more necessary. The high level of skill knowledge of children in one-parent families supports Weiss' (1981) view that children in one-parent families 'grow up a little faster.' When conflict occurs in one-parent families, skills knowledge is likely to remain at about the same level as when there is no conflict, for the children may be already helping to capacity.

Primary school children in stepfamilies, like children in one-parent families, had a higher level of skills knowledge than children in intact families when there was no conflict apparent. Conflict appeared to have little effect on their skills knowledge, probably for the reason given above: they are accustomed to attending to many tasks themselves and have already learned the needed skills.

As mentioned earlier, secondary school children from all family types have a high level of skills knowledge, regardless of family conflict. Most children of this age have already developed the capacity to cater for their own needs and assist in the household. Therefore, conflict and the distraction of their parents will not necessitate the acquisition of extra skills.

Overall, our data indicate that aspects of competence measured by the CLOZE reading test and the Piers-Harris self concept scale are negatively affected by family conflict, although the effects are stronger in some family types, and in certain age groups, than in others. Although there were observed differences by family type, it is not clear from this preliminary analysis whether these differences are due to family type as such, or to the mediating effects of other variables, such as socio-economic status, which might be associated with family type. Our data also indicate, however, that conflict can facilitate certain forms of competence as well. Thus, childrens' knowledge of everyday skills was positively associated with conflict among primary school children from intact families. These results suggest the importance of examining a variety of measures of competence, in that a given set of family circumstances might inhibit certain aspects of a child's development while facilitating other aspects in a complex fashion.

Directions for future research

Although these data suggest some interesting trends, they represent tentative findings based upon a very preliminary analysis. The next steps in this research will extend the present analysis in four major directions. The first direction refers to the nature of family conflict. We recognize that family conflict is a complex phenomena, which can vary along a number of dimensions. For example, conflict can vary in its source, with some conflict originating in the parent-parent relationship and other conflict originating in the parent-child relationship. Conflict can also vary in its form, appearing as open anger and hostility in some families, and taking the form of coldness and mutual withdrawal in others.

We intend to construct measures reflecting both the form and source of conflict in families, and to examine child competence in relation to these measures. Such an analysis will move beyond the simple classification of three quarters of our sample into the category 'no conflict families' to allow finer discriminations to be made in the levels of conflict experienced by, for what are most of the time, relatively harmonious families.

Second, it is apparent that families differ in the extent to which they are capable of offering resources to facilitate the development of competence in their children. Thus, we will be examining the relations between family conflict, family type, and child competence while controlling for such variables as parent's education and occupation, family income level, family size, school type, and urban-rural residence, to see how these affect the nature of the underlying relationship. Thus, future analyses will necessarily be multivariate in nature.

Third, the analysis will attempt to move beyond simple description of the relationships between variables to delineate what the intervening mechanisms are which mediate the effects of family conflict on child competence. For example, does conflict produce lowered self-esteem in children because it reduces the amount of high quality time spent with parents, allowing fewer opportunities for praise and encouragement? Or does lower self-esteem reflect the embarrassment and social stigma of growing up in a conflictual family? Alternately, does scape-goating occur such that the child is made to feel guilty for the hostility in his or her family life?

It is anticipated that this phase of the analysis will utilize both quantitative responses to close-ended questionnaire items, and qualitative material generated through responses to open-ended items.

Finally, it is intended to supplement the three measures of child competence used in the present report with additional measures. These will include measures dealing with the child's friendships with other children and adults; degree of independence; abilities and interests in relation to hobbies, sport, and clubs; and fears. It is hoped in this manner to provide a more well-rounded picture of the child's development of competence across a wide range of life areas.

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Table 1: Product-moment correlations between three measures of child competence among primary school children ($n = 198$) and secondary school children ($n = 204$)[a]

	CLOZE Reading Score	Self-Esteem (CSCS)	Skills Knowledge
CLOZE Reading Score	—	.26**	-.04
Self-Esteem (CSCS)	-.02	—	.16*
Skills Knowledge	.18*	.25**	—

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[a] Primary school sample above diagonal, secondary school sample below diagonal.

* $p < .05$, two-tailed

**$p < .001$, two-tailed

Table 2: Means and standard deviations of three competence measures broken down by three levels of family conflict (Primary school sample)

		Family conflict			
Competence Measure		(1) No conflict or tension (n = 160)	(2) Some tension (n = 25)	(3) Overt conflict (n = 13)	Rank-order correlation
CLOZE Reading Score	$\bar{X}$ (S)	71.9 (22.1)	64.3 (22.1)	64.0 (30.9)	-.13*
Self-Esteem Score (CSCS)	$\bar{X}$ (S)	60.4 (10.8)	52.8 (13.2)	50.7 (15.8)	-.24**
Skills Knowledge	$\bar{X}$ (S)	13.8 (3.3)	13.9 (3.6)	15.7 (1.7)	.11

* $p < .10$, two-tailed

** $p < .001$, two-tailed

Table 3: Means and standard deviations of three competence measures broken down by three levels of family conflict (secondary school sample)

Competence Measure		Family conflict (1) No conflict or tension (n = 148)	(2) Some tension (n = 28)	(3) Overt conflict (n = 28)	Rank-order Correlation
CLOZE Reading Score	$\bar{X}$	70.0	62.9	69.4	-.12*
	(S)	(15.2)	(16.0)	(12.9)	
Self-Esteem Score (CSCS)	$\bar{X}$	58.4	53.1	49.4	-.26**
	(S)	(9.9)	(11.8)	(13.7)	
Skills Knowledge	$\bar{X}$	18.7	18.2	18.7	-.12*
	(S)	(1.7)	(1.5)	(1.3)	

* $p < .10$, two-tailed

** $p < .001$, two-tailed

Table 4: Rank-order correlations (Spearman's Rho) between family conflict ratings and three measures of child competence for primary and secondary school children from three family types

Sample	CLOZE Reading Score	Self-Esteem (CSCS)	Skills Knowledge	n
Primary intact	-.06	-.16	.26***	101
Primary stepfamily	-.05	-.39**	.11	34
Primary one-parent	-.16	-.23*	-.12	61
Secondary intact	-.02	-.27***	-.17*	99
Secondary stepfamily	-.09	-.28*	.18	40
Secondary one-parent	-.25**	-.14	-.14	63

* $p < .10$, two-tailed

** $p < .05$, two-tailed

*** $p < .01$, two-tailed

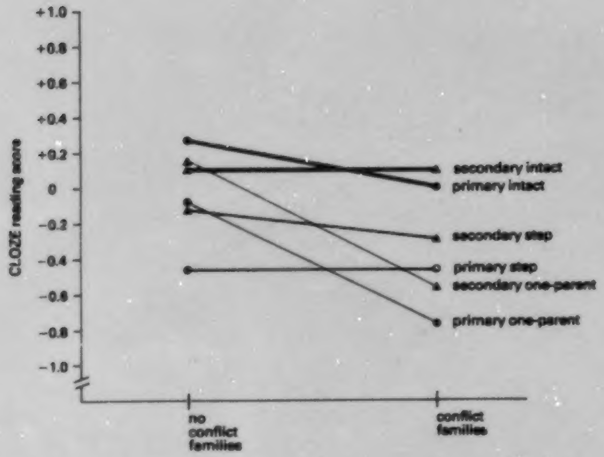

Figure 1 Mean CLOZE reading z scores and family conflict. Primary and secondary school students from three family types

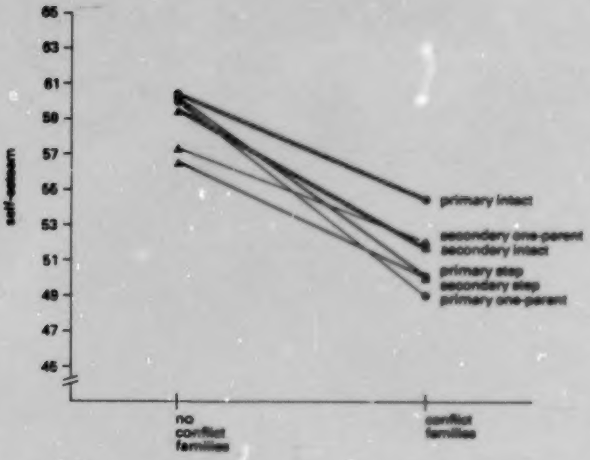

Figure 2 Mean self-esteem scores (Piers-Harris) and family conflict. Primary and secondary students from three family types

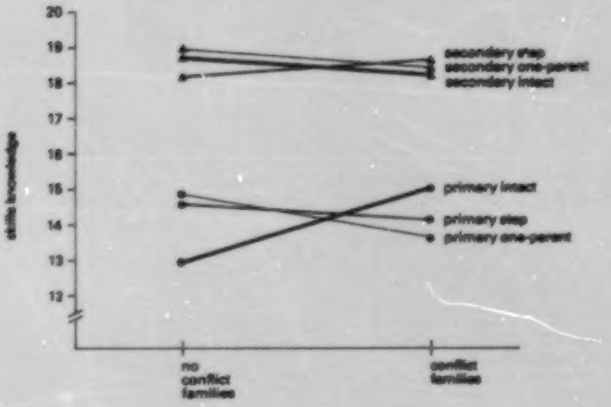

Figure 3 Mean skills knowledge scores and family conflict. Primary and secondary students from three family types

Me in my family: A comparative study of young children's descriptions of their intra-family interactions

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INTRODUCTION

What kind of a person is a dad?

a five-year old replies,

> "When he hadn't grown up he was called a boy and when he grows up and is young he is called a man and then when he grows up more he marries, he is called a father, and he is also called the husband to the mum."

What kind of a person is a mum?

a six-year old replies,

> "She sweeps her floors, she washes them, she cleans the frigerator. She is going to make a sandpit. She goes to carpentry and she cooks dinner. She visits and she shops."

What kind of a person are you?

a seven year old replies,

> "I read a lot and I collect stamps. I like to skate and ride my bike. I play a lot, I watch T.V. I argue with my brother."

The *verbatim* descriptions which children use to convey their knowledge of people and events in the social world hold a fascination all of their own. But whether they are merely idiosyncratic or are to be understood and explained in a more systematic way is a relatively under-explored area of investigation in human development.

Earlier theories which did not acknowledge the child as an active participant in his/her own socialisation and which did not conceptualise the socialisation process in interactional terms acted as a barrier to the investigation of the child's world from the perspective of the child. Further, such socialisation theories were accompanied by scant respect, on the part of methodologists, for personal commentary as a scientific method of data collection. More recently social mold theories of socialisation have given way to social adaptation theories. Such theories both acknowledge that the individual is not a constant entity over time, and require consideration of the relations between the developing individual and the social contexts within which development takes place. Within the newer analytic framework individuals, their family, and their social world are inextricably united and studies that consider only one of the components of this unit ignore an ubiquitous part of the whole (for an elaborated discussion see Lerner, R. and Spanier, G., 1978). A concommitant outcome of the changed understanding of the socialisation process is the increased acknowledgement that "as the child experiences the possibility of comparing, relating, interpreting and explaining personal encounters with other persons and social institutions these experiences become the occasions that lead to the child's ever-increasing understanding of the social world" (Furth, H., Baur, M. and Smith, J., 1976).

Whilst changes in the analytic paradigm have given increased emphasis to the child being an active agent in the socialisation process researchers remain sceptical of "the credibility of children as accurate reporters of their own activities and ideas" (Boocock, 1975). The credibility of verbal data collected directly from children, and the usefulness of such data, will remain controversial whilst there continues to be a paucity of specific conceptual and empirical illustrations of the developing child's perception of childhood experiences.

The study which this paper reports results from a conviction on my part that the family of the child is fundamentally important to the development of the child. It provides the child's prime social experience and it determines some crucial life chances for the child. But, to date, the influence of the family upon the child has most often been studied through adult observation, inference and interpretation and rarely has the child's experience within the family been studied from the perspective of the child. It is timely to redress that imbalance. For, I would suggest that if we, the adults, are able to gain increased insight into children's impressions of their social worlds we will make new sense of the adult/child relationship and use this knowledge both in our own interactions with children and in our work of disseminating information to parents and to professionals who work with young children.

AN OVERVIEW OF PRIOR RESEARCH INTO CHILDREN'S IMPRESSIONS OF THEIR SOCIAL WORLD

Studies which have looked at children's understanding of the social world encompass three broad areas. Those which have investigated the child's understanding of social institutions and social organisation; those which have looked at the child's understanding of social relationships and those which have looked at children's impressions of other people.

Piaget's theory of sequential cognitive development has served as the main theoretical basis for empirical studies, which have looked at the child's understanding of social organization or institutions. These studies are all in accord with the claim that social knowledge is not something "that is merely handed on to the child from the outside in the form of external teaching or socialisation" (Furth, H., 1980). The outside pressures are there, but they are a necessary not sufficient condition of development. Rather, for each child, social awareness develops in a series of stages each of which involves a reorganization of mental elements by the child. Thus in each child society is actively constructed and reconstructed. For example, Furth (1980) in his study of the child's perception of the economic structure says his "results establish that developmental stages of societal thinking correlate strongly and positively with age." Connell (1977), in his study of class consciousness in childhood claims to demonstrate three main stages through which ideas about the class structure pass and at each step cognitive development conditions the child's understanding of the social class structure.

Similarly in his investigation of children's understanding of social relationships Rubin (1980) presents a stages of awareness schema. In Stage I, most often characteristic of children between the ages of about six and eight, the child conceives of friendship as one-way assistance. At Stage II, which is most often characteristic of children between the ages of about nine and twelve, for the first time, friendship is understood as a two-way street in which each friend must adapt to the needs of the other. It is however only in the transformation from Stage II to Stage III that children, by now typically in late childhood or early adolescence, come to reflect on issues of intimacy and mutuality in a continuing relationship.

In those studies which have investigated children's perceptions of other people Werner's orthogenetic principle of development has dominated as the major theoretical influence. An application of Werner's principle suggests that, with age, the child's impression of other people will move from being global, undifferentiated and concrete in descriptive detail to being more differentiated, more detailed, more abstract and more likely to include psychological dimensions of personality. Empirical results have supported this hypothesis. For example, in 1973, Livesley and Bromley demonstrated that in an age related sequence the child's perception of other people shifted in focus from a description solely of discrete and directly observable actions to a description which included mention of the underlying intention. Peevers and Secord, (1973) claimed that, with increasing age, children describe people in a more sharply differentiated way. Other studies also report that children in the younger age levels describe people predominantly in situational terms whilst descriptions in psychological terms appear as a later development.

There has been some research evidence to suggest that future studies of the child's perception of other people would be strengthened if they were to give increased attention to the context within which the child's impression formation takes place. For example, in 1971, Scarlett et al noted that their young respondents were offering more mature levels of description of people whom they disliked relative to those whom they liked. Rosenach et al (1973) postulated that strong emotional involvement with the individual being described reduced the developmental level of the impression articulated. Livesley and Bromley (1973) and Peevers and Secord (1973) found that higher level descriptions were offered of people for whom the children had positive feelings. It appears that children's feelings about people may well influence the level at which they describe them but the relationship between direction of feeling and level of descriptive impression is yet to be resolved.

A review of prior studies thus supports the proposition that the child's understanding of social phenomena is likely to be a function of both the child's level of cognitive development and the context of the child's social experience. The study which I am about to describe is structured to allow for comparisons of both cognitive development across an age-range and social experience within two diverse family life styles.

A DESCRIPTION OF THE STUDY

A. The Sample

It consisted of forty children, twenty boys and twenty girls, all attending the same inner-suburban primary school in Melbourne, and living in the same geographic location. They were selected by their teachers, as children who would be at ease in a taped interview with a person unknown to them. Twenty of the children were living in households of intact families (they will be referred to as traditional families), and twenty were living in non-intact families (they will be referred to as alternative families). The children from each of these family life-style types were age-matched. The youngest child in the sample was 5 years and two months, and the oldest child in the sample was nine years and eight months. Typically, the children in the traditional families lived in detached suburban houses with mother, father and one or two siblings. The household experiences of the children in alternative families were in marked contrast. A majority of these children lived, by their own definition, in at least two households, the household of the parent with major custodial responsibility and the household of the parent with access rights. Membership in both custody and access households tended to be diverse, typically it might include members of the extended family, step-parents, full and half siblings and friends of the parents. In terms of day to day interaction, the contrast was clear. On average children in alternative families were surrounded by, and interacted with, many more people, both adults and children, than did those children who lived in traditional families.

B. The Method of Data Collection

> "It is so hard not to talk too much when questioning a child, especially for a pedagogue! It is so hard not to be suggestive! And, above all, it is so hard to find the middle course between systemisation due to preconceived ideas and incohesiveness due to the absence of any directing hypothesis! ... When students begin they either suggest to the child all they hope to find or they suggest nothing at all because they are not on the lookout out for anything, in which case to be sure they will never find anything" (Piaget, J., 1929).

This represents a cogent summary of the particular methodological problem which faces the researcher who wishes to elicit verbal, free-response data from children. A high proportion of the studies which have asked children to describe people, relationships or social institutions have not looked at how children describe these in their own words. Yet, the use of check lists and closed-response questionnaires will never enable us to record the verbal concepts with which the child describes his/her social world.

Within this study the more traditional interview techniques which had been used with young children were dismissed and a technique influenced by Piaget's clinical interview method was developed. The children were given a set of carboard figures representing adults and children of both sexes, across the age-spectrum. They were asked to make a family and then to discuss it and the attributes of the people they had put in the family. The children were asked to define their own family. Additionally they were asked to describe the activities they typically participated in with members of their own family and household, to name whom would be their most likely companion for a wide range of daily activities and to name whom in the family would be their source of consolation and advice in the event of a range of typical childhood incidents taking place.

The essence of the technique is to investigate the child's world on the child's terms. The flexibility allowed to the researcher makes it more likely that all of the children have a comparable understanding of the task they are participating in. An essential part of the flexibility lies in the researcher eliciting the same information in several different ways ensuring the application of Piaget's suggestion that "one must probe all around the suspect answer to see whether or not it's roots are solid and then to proceed to ask the question under as many different guises as possible" (Piaget, 1929) (for further elaboration of this discussion see Riach, 1984).

Two clear limitations of this method of data collection must be acknowledged. First, the researcher must be fully aware that what children say and describe does not necessarily define the limits of their social understanding. Thus articulation must not be equated with social knowledge. Second, free-response material is invariably coded for purposes of collective analysis. Inevitable in this process is the subjective influence of the researcher.

A DESCRIPTION OF THE CHILDREN'S RESPONSES

Universally the children in this study described a family in terms of social roles i.e. a mum, a dad, a child.

A. Description of Parents

When describing a mum and a dad, no age-related pattern of attributes emerged. All of the children across the age range and across the family life style range were likely to use more than one attribute to describe a parent in a family. When the children described the essence of the image which they have of a mum and a dad they drew heavily on the use of gender and of traditional role activity attributed, i.e., a mum cooks, cleans and cares for the children, a dad goes to work. At this basic level of description, the concrete attributes used do not differentiate one person within a role from another person occupying that same role. In addition the children sometimes used advanced description, they included abstract attributes, i.e., "he can't tolerate much silliness", "sometimes she is a cruel mother and sometimes she is a nice mother", "he is a kind man", "she is a nice lady and she helps". The use of such attributes results in a more differentiated impression of the person being described.

When children in traditional families described a mum 75% of them used solely concrete, undifferentiated attributes in their descriptions, whilst 25% of them also included abstract differentiated attributes in their descriptions.

When children in traditional families described a dad 35% of them used solely concrete undifferentiated attributes and 65% added to these abstract differentiated attributes.

When children in alternative families described a mum 40% used solely concrete undifferentiated attributes and 60% used in addition abstract differentiated attributes.

When the children of alternative families described a dad 55% of them used solely concrete undifferentiated attributes and 45% of them additionally used abstract differentiated attributes in their descriptions.

Thus, within this study children who lived in traditional families were likely to hold a developmentally less mature impression of a mum than they did of a dad and a less mature impression of a mum than the impressions held of both a mum and a dad by children from alternative families.

B. Self-Description

Two indicators were used to ascertain the image the children had of themselves and how they portrayed themselves as family members. In reply to the question what kind of a person are you?, the children from traditional family life styles distributed their replies in the following ways. Five per cent gave no reply, 45% described themselves solely with reference to undifferentiated gender and/or social category attributes, e.g. "I am a boy", "I am a kid". Fifty per cent of these children made use of differentiating personal attributes in their self-descriptions e.g. "I like making friends and I never fight", "I like doing jobs for money". Younger children were more likely to use gender or social category attributes and older children made more use of personal attributes. When the children in alternative families were asked for the same self description no age-related pattern emerged. Twenty-five per cent of the children did not respond, 45% described themselves solely in undifferentiated terms of gender and/or social category whilst 30% of these children made use of differentiated personal attributes in their self-descriptions.

In response to the question what do you do in your family?, children living in traditional families responded in an age-related pattern. Whilst the younger children had a strong tendency to describe their most frequent in-family activity to be that of undifferentiated play the older children in this subsample most frequently described their typical in-family activity to be the rendering of assistance in a range of differentiated activities, e.g. "I dry the dishes, bring in the milk, make the breakfast and get paid for these things". In contrast were the replies of the children living in alternative families. Within the households where they spent all, or most, of their time and within the households where they spent some of their time the overwhelming majority of these children portrayed their most typical at-home activity to be that of undifferentiated play.

Thus, within this study, children living in alternative family life styles were considerably less likely to use developmentally mature attributes to describe themselves than were children living in traditional families. Yet, when describing parents the children in alternative families were more likely to offer a developmentally more mature impression than that offered by children in traditional families.

C. The Children's Descriptions of Family Interaction

(i) Daily Activities

The children were asked whom they were most likely to undertake a range of daily activities with at home, e.g., talk, play, watch television, read, make and mend things, tidy up, exchange secrets, buy clothes and toys, spend the day with when ill. Although all of the children were likely to experience interchangeability in routine companionship, clear constrasts in the two family life styles emerged. For the children in traditional families mum was most frequently named as their sole companion, and dad least frequently named. In mum's company they typically tidied up, shopped, and spent the day when sick. The activity most often shared with dad was that of mending broken possessions. For the children in the alternative families, mum and dad were named with equal frequency as being the most constant sole companion, (this was facilitated by the fact that a majority of these children belonged to two households). Further, these children were equally likely to undertake traditional male and traditional female activities with either parent and they were more likely to have a wider range of activities which, for at least some of the time, they undertook jointly with a parent, a member of the extended family, a step parent or a family friend.

(ii) Reference Points

The children were asked to name the person(s) from whom they would seek advice across a range of likely occurrences in the life of a child aged 5-9 years, e.g. a bad day with school work, a bad day with friends, a need for additional money, instructions on how to play a newly acquired game, a need for a companion. The actual availability of adults for consultation was equally a constraint for children from both family life styles. Mum was the parent most likely to be available in the traditional household whilst the custodial parent was the one most likely to be available in the alternative families. Notwithstanding some interesting contrasts emerged. Children in traditional families were either equally prepared to consult mum or dad or alternatively to consult only mum. In traditional families dad as a sole consultant was important only in the event of wanting advice on a new game. Children in alternative families, in addition to frequently consulting their parents, made much more use of extended family and family friends. They rarely cited mum and dad as being interchangeable, the one exception being when they sought advice on a new game. Rather mum and dad were used by the children as reference points for different areas of advice and overall each parent was important as a source of consultation and consolation.

(iii) Activities Shared by Parents and Children

The children were also asked to name what activities are typically undertaken by parents with their children. Further constrasts in each family life style became apparent. More than 75% of the children in the alternative families presented an image of both mum and dad playing with, or undertaking fun activities with the child. Similarly 65% of the children in traditional families presented an image of dad joining his children in their domain of play, fun outings and physical activity. In marked constrast was the image of mum presented by children of traditional families. They were much more likely to describe mother-child interaction taking place in the traditional adult-female domain of housework, household shopping and child care.

(iv) Sons and Daughters in Families

The study provided some opportunity to discover how these children experience family life and family interaction within the gender roles of son and daughter. Specifically it was possible to investigate the extent to which sons and daughters have different experiences within helping relationships, in the receipt and expression of affection and in the acquisition of additional finances.

The vast majority of children within both family life styles stated a belief that people in families do help each other. The children were somewhat more likely to know how they helped their parents than to articulate how their parents helped them. Those children reporting parental assistance to themselves described the assistance which they received in quite concrete and task-specific terms, e.g. "she helps with spelling", "he makes me hot chocolate". The children who lived in traditional households were more likely to report gender-differentiated ways in which they helped their parents. Daughters assisted mum with household chores and helped dad with cooking and washing. Sons fetched, carried and gardened for mum and assisted dad with fixing and mending. In contrast the children who lived in alternative households did not report such marked gender differences in the way they rendered assistance to their parents. Both sons and daughters typically reported assisting mum and dad with chores such as cooking and cleaning.

Similarly, gender differentiation was evident in the replies of children in traditional households when they discussed how they would acquire additional money. Daughters generally reported that they would ask a parent. Sons, overwhelmingly, reported that they would earn it. Both sons and daughters from alternative family life styles were equally likely to ask a parent, or other significant adult, for additional money. There was little evidence that any of them had experienced earning as an additional source of income.

The children from both family life styles acknowledged an expectation that people in families love each other, although at times this was acknowledged in a conditional way. In both family life styles, but particularly for children of alternative households, specific behaviours e.g. "I am good", and the rendering of assistance, e.g. "I help her with the cleaning", were more typically reported as expressions of affection than were physical expressions of affection. The older children in the study were more likely to recognise assistance and specific behaviours as expressions of affection and hence they reported with much greater frequency, than did the younger children in the study, that they knew how affection was expressed between themselves and their parents. Physical expression of affection was mentioned with much greater frequency by children in traditional households, particularly by daughters who experienced physical expression of affection in their relationships with both parents.

In alternative households daughters reported physical expression of affection much more frequently than did sons, but in these households physical expression was experienced only within the daughter-mother relationship and not within the daughter-father relationship.

DISCUSSION

This demonstrates that our insight into childhood in the family is enhanced by studies which ask children to discuss the meaning of family and their experiences of family life. It provides support for the proposition that a study of the world of childhood is less than complete if the child's perspective is not an integral part of that study.

Within this study there is some support for the hypothesis that children's ability to describe their social world becomes more differentiated with age and that during their childhood years their view of the social world will be different to that held by adults. However, of much more significance in this study are the clearly differentiated social experiences of the children within each of the represented family life styles.

Whilst a small scale study is not one from which generalised claims are appropriate its worth can be seen to lie in the tentative suggestions which it yields. These may then be tested, using larger samples, across a wider range of situations. This study suggests -

1. that impression formation may relate to social experience. For children in traditional families the intensity of the day-to-day interaction with mum, relative to the much lower frequency of interaction with dad, and the disparate patterns of interaction with each may relate to the developmentally different descriptions which these children offer of a mum and a dad. For the children in the alternative families the similar frequency of, and patterns of, interaction which they experience with both mum and dad may relate to the developmentally similar descriptions which they offer of a mum and a dad.

2. the relationship between the domain of shared activities and impression formation deserves further attention. When the children described the child-parent interaction taking place in the play and fun domain of the child, rather than the care and housework domain of the adult, they were likely to offer a developmentally more mature impression of that parent.

3. the relationships between the child's experiences in the worlds of childhood and adulthood and the child's development of a self-image needs further investigation. Within this study those children who described the prime child-adult interactions as taking place both within the play domain of the child (with the father) and within the household maintenance domain of the adult (with the mother) offered a developmentally more mature self-description than did those children who described their prime

interactions with adults to be solely in the play domain of the child.

4. the relationship between the child's relatively lower level of personal experience of gender differentiation and the lower level gender differentiation which the child attributes to adult males and females merits further study. Sons and daughters in alternative family life styles articulated a range of family experiences and interactions that were less gender differentiated than those described by daughters and sons in traditional families. Children in alternative families demonstrated less gender differentiation in their portrayed images of mum and dad.

In 1978 Lerner and Spanier wrote, "the disciplinary isolation that has characterised both the child development and the sociology fields is waning". If this is so I thoroughly support such a move. A study such as this one supports the claim that our understanding of the child's understanding of the social world requires an inter- disciplinary approach, incorporating both study of the child's cognitive developmental processes, which is the traditional domain of psychology, and study of the child's social context, commonly regarded as belonging to the discipline of sociology.

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Neighbourhood quality and child adjustment

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Bronfenbrenner (1979) and his colleagues (Garbarino et al., 1980, Garbarino, 1982, Cochran and Brassard, 1979) have drawn our attention to the importance of the ecology in which human development takes place. In Bronfenbrenner's words "human development involves the scientific study of the progressive, mutual accommodation between an active, growing human being and the changing properties of the immediate settings in which the developing person lives" (1979:21). The ecology of course can be conceived of in broad and narrow terms, and Bronfenbrenner proposes that it be "conceived topologically as a nested arrangement of concentric structures, each contained within the next". The present study concerns itself with the neighbourhood layer of this onion-like structure. The research question is the relationship between neighbourhood quality and the social and emotional development of children. The data come from a larger study of community and family interaction involving 321 9-11 year old children and their families living in Sydney, Australia.

As Garbarino (1982: 163) points out, neighbourhoods vary in how strong and healthy they are. In part, these variations can be attributed to the personal economic status of the individuals who live within the area. Within equivalent economic levels, however, neighbourhoods can vary quite substantially, due to variations in the availability of services and supports, and in the level of environmental stressors such as pollution and crime (Warren and Warren, 1977). These variations can occur at all economic levels, but in practice the importance of the neighbourhood is probably greater as a factor affecting family life and child development among the poor (Smith, 1976). Garbarino accordingly argues that "if we can identify communities and neighbourhoods with characteristics that make them high risk places for families, then we can predict that social pathology among their families will be high" (1982:164).

Until recently a means of identifying the health or risk of neighbourhoods has proved hard to find. New techniques in the computer analysis of census and social statistics however now make it possible to quantify neighbourhood quality (Garbarino, Stocking and associates; 1980; Vinson and Homel, 1976). The Vinson-Homel "risk" index, used in this study as a measure of neighbourhood quality, is defined as the relative vulnerability of an area to a range of conditions that are commonly defined as social problems. The study by Vinson and Homel, originally commissioned in 1975 by the Australian government to help develop reliable measures of local community need, stands very much in the social indicators tradition which is recommended by Garbarino (1982) as a fruitful new approach to the exploration of the relationships between community ecology and family characteristics and pathologies. Twenty five indicators were constructed for areas which the literature has shown to be problematic in western societies - income and self-sufficiency, physical and mental health, education outcomes, public order and safety and family stability (Smith, 1973). Recognising that census data allows the construction of only a small number of variables which are direct indicators of social problems, major use was made of other governmental data, both published and unpublished (for example petitions for divorce, emergency cash assistance and children in slow learners' classes).

The neighbourhood risk score was derived from a principal components analysis of the 25 indicators. A general risk factor has since been located by confirmatory factor analysis, and has been shown to be associated with biomedical indicators (Gibson and Johansen, 1979) and (through surveys in areas of varying degrees or risk) with measures of community solidarity, with parents' locus of control (Rotter, 1966) and with educational aspirations for children. The purpose of the present study is to extend this work by examining the linkage between neighbourhood risk and children's self-reported social and emotional wellbeing. The research hypothesis is that risk will be inversely related to children's wellbeing.

To allow for the fact that neighbourhood risk is correlated with personal socioeconomic status of parents, measures of occupational and educational status and family income are also included, and the method of analysis includes an allowance for the contribution of each predictor over and above that of other predictors with which it may be correlated. In addition because of the high proportion of recent immigrants in the Australian population (Census of Australia, 1983), and the known influence of ethnic background on parental child-rearing practices (Marjoribanks, 1979; Burns and Goodnow, 1978), immigrant status, and the associated variables of religion and urbanicity of background are also included in the study.

In line with Bronfenbrenner's layered conceptualisation of the environment ("a set of nested structures, each inside the next, like a set of Russian dolls" (1979:22)), some more intimate measures of environment are also included. The type of street in which the family lives (purely residential or mixed with commercial or industrial premises) was found by Vinson, Homel and Bonney (1976) to be associated with social pathology, and street type is accordingly included as a separate measure of risk, the research hypothesis being that children living in purely residential streets will report higher levels of wellbeing. Secondly, a still more intimate layer of environment - the nature of the family's housing - is also taken into consideration. Quality and type of housing, floor occupied in high rise premises, home ownership and availability of outside playspace are all included in the analysis as independent variables, in line with the hypothesis that these aspects of the child's immediate environment make their own contribution to his or her developmental experience (Bronfenbrenner, 1979; Gump, 1975; Cohen, Glass and Singer, 1973).

Bronfenbrenner (1979) and Garbarino (1982) suggest that neighbourhood quality will affect family life and child development in multiple ways, including life satisfaction and emotional and social adjustment. The present study uses measures from these three general areas. Firstly, children were asked to rate their satisfaction with themselves, their families, their friends and their schoolwork. Secondly, they were asked to rate the frequency of feelings of worry, fear, anger and unhappiness. Thirdly, friendship patterns and feelings towards other children were investigated. With the exception of one friendship item which was rated by the mother, all data came from interviews with children. The items are adapted from the interview schedule developed by the U.S. Foundation for Child Development (Lash and Sigal, 1976).

In line with the literature on neighbourhood and community (Rossi, 1972; Martin, 1970), it is predicted that the neighbourhood variables will exert an influence on children's self-reported social and emotional well-being over and above the influence of immigrant status and personal socioeconomic status. Specifically, it is predicted that children living in lower quality environments will be less satisfied with the various areas of their lives, will experience more negative emotions, and will have more restricted and less positive friendship patterns.

DESIGN

The Sample

The sample comprised 321 Sydney families which included a 9-11 year old child (9-11 year olds were chosen as the child interviews were an important feature of the larger study and included questions that demanded a certain level of cognitive and social maturity). In order to obtain a sample that would be weighted so as to represent the total Sydney population, but which also adequately represented the neighbourhood variables being investigated, a three-stage probability sampling procedure was used. In the first stage the 36 administrative regions of the city (Local Government Areas: LGAs) were stratified into six categories representing high, medium and low level of risk, (Vinson ahd Homel, 1976) each level being divided into inner and outer regions of the city. Within each stratum, one LGA was then selected with probability proportional to the number of 9-11 year old children resident in the areas. Three neighbourhoods (school feeder districts) were then selected from within each LGA, using a probability sampling formula which included estimated neighbourhood risk score and percentage of the population born overseas. Within each school district, the names of 9-11 year old children were randomly selected from school rolls and letters sent home to parents requesting permission that they and their child be interviewed. In all, 18 state primary schools and 17 Roman Catholic parochial schools serving the same areas were involved; the average response rate over schools was 70.4 percent. The final sample comprised 164 girls and 157 boys. Children were interviewed at school and parents subsequently interviewed in their homes.

The Measures.

Predictor Variables. In line with the onion analogy, predictor variables have been grouped into four "layers". The first layer relates to the individual child, and includes *age* (individual years) and *sex*. The second group of variables relates to the family, and includes measures of socioeconomic and immigrant status, as well as the number of children in the family. The third layer relates to housing, and the fourth to the neighbourhood.

Risk scores for the 18 school districts were calculated following a formula derived from Vinson and Homel (details available on request). The obtained risk scores (equivalent to factor scores) ranged from +3.63 to -2.05, with the two highest risk districts (both in the inner city high risk LGA) standing out as notably higher than all other areas(+3.63, +2.96) and the two lowest (both in the outer low-risk LGA) as notably lower (-2.95, -1.80) (this of course reflects the fact that risk is not a linearly distributed variable. *Street type* was rated by the interviewer, and these ratings were dichotomised into residential or commercial/industrial/mixed.

Measures of *housing* environment were (a) *type* (separate dwelling, attached, low rise apartment, high rise apartment, above shop, other), (b) *floor occupied*, (c) *housing upkeep* relative to that of the rest of the street, (d) *home ownership* (owning or buying, private rental, welfare/rental), (e) amount of outside *playspace* available.

Immigrant status was collapsed into five categories: AA (both parents native Australian born); NN (both parents born overseas in a non-English speaking country: Italy, Greece and Yugoslavia in most instances);

AN/NA (mixed marriages between an Australian born and a non-English speaking born parent); EE/E+ (one or both parents born in an overseas English-speaking country) and SP (single parents, whom it did not appear appropriate to assign to any of the previous categories, although most were in fact Australian-born). The associated variable of urbanicity of background was coded into three categories (both rural, mixed, both urban). Occupational status was from Congalton's 7-point scale of Australian occupations, with an additional category included for unemployed: (upper professional/managerial, lower professional/managerial, upper clerical/sales, lower clerical/sales, skilled blue collar, semi-skilled, unskilled (Congalton, 1969). Where both mother and father were employed the higher status occupation was used (almost always that of the father). Paternal and maternal education were included as separate variables using a 7-point scale. Family income was calculated by dividing total income by the number of persons dependent on this income, using a weighted formula developed by the Australian Commission of Enquiry into Poverty (Saunders, 1980). Mother's employment status was classified as employed in the workforce (full or part-time) or not employed. Religion and religious commitment were incorporated into an 8-fold categorisation (Protestant, Roman Catholic, Greek Orthodox, other, with/without high religious commitment). Commitment was measured by the question "How important is it to you to provide religious training for your children (very important, fairly important, fairly unimportant, not at all important).

Child Outcome Measures

Life Areas Satisfaction. The children were presented with a set of five line-drawn faces with expressions ranging from very happy to sad. Once it was established that the child understood this to be a scale, she (or he) was asked to choose the face which best represented her feelings about herself. The procedure was then repeated for feelings about friends, schoolwork and family.

Negative Emotions. The child was presented with a set of faces representing various emotions and asked to choose that which displayed worry. Once the correct choice had been made, the question was asked "What about you? Do you worry about things: often, sometimes, hardly ever, or never?" A list of common sources of worry was then read to the child and he or she was asked to nominate which if any was true for him/her. The same procedure was repeated for anger and fear ("being scared"), and in the letter case the question was also asked: "Who is the person you are most afraid of?" Finally, the child was asked to select one of five faces (smiling to sad) to "show how things are going in your life".

Children's social adjustment. The following questions were used to measure children's networks. (1) How many children do you play with, at school and at weekends, etc. (2) Do most of your friends know each other? (Yes/No) (3) Do you have a best friend, or a number of friends you like about the same? (4) When children choose sides for a game are you usually: one of the first children picked, one of the last, or usually in the middle? (5) Do you ever feel lonely and wish you had more friends? (Often, sometimes, never). (6) Do you like most of the children in your class? (7) Not counting your family, are there any grown-ups around where you live with whom you like to talk and spend time? (8) (Asked of parent) Compared to other children the same age, how well does (child) get along with other children? (Much better, better, about the same, worse).

RESULTS

As expected, the measures of neighbourhood, housing, personal socioeconomic status and ethnic/cultural background were intercorrelated, but not so highly as to render any two measures interchangeable. A cross-tabulation of occupational status against risk showed that there was quite high concordance between the highest and lowest scores, but considerable spread in the middle range, giving an overall correlation (Pearson P-M) of $r = .41$, $p = .000$. The correlations between risk and father's education and between risk and family income were somewhat lower ($r = .22$, $p = .000$; $r = .25$, $p = .000$). While these correlations are highly significant statistically, the shared variance is quite modest, supporting the conceptualisation of risk as a variable separate from personal socioeconomic status.

Living in a predominantly non-residential street (12.1 percent of the sample) was most common among the inner-city high-risk children, well over one-third (38 percent) of such children coming from this LGA. Housing in such streets tended to be of poorer than average quality (Cramer's $V = .25$; $P = .000$) and to lack outside playspace ($V = .17$; $P = .001$). Residents of these areas were more likely to be non-English speaking born immigrants ($V = .15$; $P = .07$) and tended to have lower than average educational qualifications ($V = .25$; $P = .09$).

Life Areas Satisfaction

Mean scores on these items were rather low, skewed to the happy end. Satisfaction was greatest with family and friends (94.8 percent and 93.1 percent of children respectively indicating the two happiest faces). The heavily skewed nature of these distributions suggests that the measures reflect not so much a continuum of happiness from high to low, but more a natural division of children into two groups: the majority who are fairly contented, and a minority whose extreme scores indicate considerable dissatisfaction and unhappiness. Given that the reliabilities of individual items are likely to be low, it seems desirable therefore to place little weight on the precise scores and to group children whose scores indicate a high degree of dissatisfaction with a given life area (as evidenced by a choice of one of the three least happy faces). The overall reliability of the measurement of life areas satisfaction can then be maximized by adding the four dichotomized items. This is equivalent to counting how many times a child gives an "extreme" response (maximum four).

TABLE 1 ABOUT HERE

Mean scores on this summated measure, together with the percentages of children unhappy with themselves, their schoolwork, their friends and their families are set out in Table 1, broken down by the two neighbourhood variables: risk and street type. The mean life satisfaction score was .92, indicating that on average children were unhappy with only one area of their lives. The reliability (alpha) of the scale was only .31, reflecting low intercorrelations between items (they ranged from zero to .2), but nevertheless there is a clear trend evident in Table 1 for higher (less happy) scores to be recorded by children living in high risk areas and in industrial/commercial streets. The trend is particularly pronounced for happiness with family, but is evident as well for the other items.

It is possible of course that these relationships arise not so much from the characteristics of the areas as from the characteristics of families living in these areas. A number of possible intervening variables are indicated in

Table 2, in the first part of which are presented all predictor variables which (when considered one at a time) correlated significantly either with an individual life satisfaction item or with the life areas satisfaction scale. Although risk was the most significant predictor of the total scale score, it failed to reach significance with any of the individual items. Street type failed to reach significance for any outcome, although it was almost significant for the scale score (P = .073)

TABLE 2 ABOUT HERE

Income was as powerful as risk as a predictor of the total score, with children from low income families expressing markedly less happiness, particularly about their families. Religion was associated with happiness with self and with friends as well with the total score, the Orthodox group generally showing up as least satisfied (immigrant Greeks and Cypriots in most cases). Interviewer-rated upkeep of the family's home (compared with the others in the street) was associated with happiness with schoolwork as well as with the total score. The relatively small proportion of children living in housing rated as worse (9.3 percent) or better (15.6 percent) than neighbouring premises were most likely to choose the less happy faces. The latter rather paradoxical-seeming finding is probably due to the fact that many residences classed as "better than the neighbours" were situated in poor localities where the neighbouring premises were singularly rundown.

Several variables appear in Table 2 which were associated only with specific life areas. Children from larger families tended to be less happy with their schoolwork, as on average were boys. In addition, children from single parent families (12.8 percent of the sample) were less happy than average with their families, as were those whose parents were renting Housing Commission or private accommodation

In sum, it appears that the variance obtained on the life areas satisfaction measures is largely the result of the lower levels of expressed happiness among children (especially boys) of low-income families (especially immigrant Greeks and Cypriots and single parent families) living in pockets of low grade private or welfare rental housing in high risk areas.

It remains to test the hypotheses that neighbourhood level variables correlate with life areas satisfaction, over and above the contribution of other variables. Total R^2 for the model with all variables included was 23.6 percent - of this, 2.2 percent was contributed by risk and street type, adjusted for all other variables. However, only street type was significant ($P = .032$; $sr^2 = 1.3\%$); risk ceased to be significant when adjustments were made for the socioeconomic variables of occupation, education and income (sr^2 is the squared semi-partial correlation, and expresses the percentage of variance in the dependent variable explained by the predictor, when adjusted for all other predictors in the model). The effect on street type of adjusting for these variables was the opposite of the effect on risk: when allowance was made for the presence of low income and immigrant groups in residential areas, the contrast between the two types of areas became more marked. Children living in streets described as predominantly industrial or commercial recorded on average .35 more areas of unhappiness, and (taking all other factors into account in the model) were much more likely to express dissatisfaction with their families ($P = .018$; $sr^2 = 1.7\%$).

As noted previously, a substantial number of these children come from the high risk inner city areas. It is interesting to ask whether these inner city children are responsible for the effect described above, or whether living in a commercial or industrial street has the same effect across all areas. To answer this question, the interaction between street type and risk was investigated. Adjusted for all other variables, the interaction was not significant for the life areas scale (P = .24), although there was evidence that children living in industrial streets in the highest risk area were particularly unhappy about their families (P = .006; sr^2 = 3.8%). On the whole, however, the street effect applied uniformly across all but the lowest risk areas.

In addition to street type, one other variable was significant in the regression analysis: father's education (Table 2). The effect, however, was the opposite of that which might have been predicted, since the children of fathers without high school education were most happy, and those with university educated fathers least happy. The regression analyses of individual life areas show that dissatisfaction with self was at the heart of the discontent (Table 2). It is possible that the emphasis placed by more highly educated parents on self-direction and self-actualisation (Kohn, 1977) creates in the child a sense of striving for high personal goals. Given the very heavy emphasis on educational achievement and "getting ahead" among Greek families (Marjoribanks, 1979), a similar explanation may be advanced for the finding (confirmed by the regression analysis) that children of Orthodox families were less happy than average with themselves.

The regression analyses of individual life areas revealed some further important patterns. Children of low income families were markedly less happy with their families, and there was a pronounced trend for children in higher risk areas to be dissatisfied with their friends. Unhappiness with self was (as noted above) associated with higher paternal education and Orthodox religion, as well as being 11 years of age rather than younger, and living in housing described by the interviewer as of poorer quality than surrounding houses.

Although the variables emerging from the regression analyses differ somewhat from those which individually predict life areas satisfaction, taken together the two sets of analyses suggest that all four layers of the "onion" are relevant, although in different ways. Both neighbourhood variables are important, with risk being associated mostly with happiness with friends. The chief contributions of the regression analyses were to reveal the importance of higher paternal education as an apparently negative factor in the expressed happiness of children, and to clarify the role of the immediate locale (indicated by street type) as a correlate of life areas satisfaction.

Emotional Adjustment

Scores on the emotional adjustment items were also skewed, although not as strongly as for the life areas satisfaction measures, with only a minority of children indicating that they were frequently worried, afraid, angry or unhappy with life (Table 3). The same procedures were therefore applied as for the life areas satisfaction measures: children who claimed to be "often" worried, afraid or angry were separated from the remainder, as were those who indicated one of the three least happy faces on the overall life rating. Since this time the items were more highly inter-correlated (the correlations ranged from .11 to .36), the reliability of the summed score was higher, at .51.

It is clear from Table 3 that street type was strongly associated with the expression of negative emotions, an impression confirmed by the statistical analyses reported in Table 4. Children living in commercial or industrial streets consistently reported more worry, fear, anger and unhappiness with life. The correlations with risk are not as clear, although there was a consistent trend for children from the highest risk areas to score highly, especially in comparison with the lowest risk area children. In fact it can be seen from Table 4 that risk was not significantly correlated with any of the outcome measures.

In addition to children living in an industrial street, very high negative emotions scores were registered by children from low income families, from the lowest (unskilled) occupational status families and from children of Orthodox religion. Worry seemed the biggest problem for these Greek and Cypriot children. Conversely, children living in housing described as being "well maintained" but consistent with the rest of the street scored low on the negative emotions scale, mainly because they were significantly less worried than other groups. Children whose fathers had no high school education were more worried and afraid than children whose fathers had higher levels of education. Coming from a family of unskilled occupational status and/or low income was also associated with higher levels of fear. Girls more often reported getting angry than boys, and children from large families were more likely to report less overall happiness with life.

The regression analyses confirmed the importance of street type as a predictor of negative emotions. The total R^2 for the summed negative emotions scale was 25.4 percent, of which 3.1 percent was contributed by street type (fitted last). However, occupational status also survived as a strong predictor, with the children from the lowest status families still registering markedly higher negative emotions scores than all other groups.

In fact, the difference in mean scores between the highest and lowest status children, adjusted for all other variables, was 1.4 (more than 1.5 standard deviations). The difference between children in industrial and residential streets was only .8.

As with the life areas satisfaction analysis, the possibility of an interaction between risk and street type was investigated. However, in contrast to the previous analysis, the interaction for the negative emotions score was highly significant ($P = .004$; $sr^2 = 3.7\%$, adjusted for all terms), and indicated that children living in commercial or industrial streets in high to medium risk areas were responsible for the role of street type as a predictor of negative emotions. That is, the negative effects of living in an industrial or commercial street were mostly confined to inner city areas and to the poorer of the outer suburban areas.

In summary, there is a very clear social class effect, reflected both in low occupational status and in living in a predominantly industrial or commercial street in a high risk area. These status and residential effects seem to account for the contributions of religion, immigrant status, housing quality and family income, since none of these variables were significant in the regression analyses.

Sources of worry, anger and fear

Table 5 presents the most commonly reported sources of worry, anger, and fear. Because of the nature of this data (open-ended and multiple response), distributions only are presented. However, since fairly large sex differences were apparent, the figures are presented separately for boys and girls.

Girls did not report any higher overall frequency of worry than boys, but they did worry more about friends ceasing to like them ($p = .002$). The girls reported feeling scared much more frequently ($p=.003$) and were up to three times more likely to refer to specific fears such as burglars getting into the house, thunder and lightning, spiders and insects, violent television programs and horror movies. The level of these fears did not vary across neighbourhoods, but with a second class of fear there was an interaction with areal risk which puts the girls at a double disadvantage. Girls in the high risk areas were especially prey to fears of being hurt by someone or something dangerous when they went outside. In addition, girls were almost twice as likely as boys to report that the person they were most afraid of was their father, and the girls in the highest risk districts were three times more likely to fear fathers than those in the lower risk areas, although the effect does not reach statistical significance (cell frequencies were small).

Girls also reported more sources of anger than boys and a higher frequency of angry feelings ($p = .02$). Teasing by boys was a major source of anger and much more commonly reported by girls in the highest risk districts (84 percent vs 47 percent, $p < .01$). The high risk girls were also more likely to harbour resentments and jealousies with respect to other children receiving more attention and rewards than themselves, being left out of things and losing in games, although these trends did not reach statistical significance. However, by far the most frequent cause of anger - conflict with brothers and sisters - tormented boys and girls equally.

As street type had emerged as a strong predictor of the summed negative emotions scores, the relationship between this variable and the major sources of worry, anger and fear was examined. Chi-square analyses showed that living in a commercial/industrial street was significantly associated with fears of not being liked by other children ($p = .039$) and fear of father ($p = .009$). Anger at cross-sex teasing was significantly greater among the non-residential street girls ($p = .047$).

Children's social adjustment

Table 5 shows that ten of the predictor measures were significantly associated with social adjustment items when each predictor was fitted independently. The item "likes most classmates" was associated with seven of these ten, and several other items also appear more than once - often lonely, plays with friends out of school, has adult friends, number of playmates, and the parental rating of the child's ability to get along with other children.

The social adjustment measures, although having a conceptual unity, represented a more heterogeneous array of feelings and behaviours than either of the outcome sets dealt with previously. Therefore rather than attempt to add all items into a single scale, a multivariate regression analysis was carried out. The model with all predictors included had high predictive power ($\Lambda = .063288$; $\eta^2 = 93.7\%$; $P = .001$) but only one individual predictor (occupational status; $P = .036$) was significant, although several other variables (risk and family income) came close. To increase statistical power, the model was therefore reduced using backward elimination, and the simultaneous testing method of Aitkin (1974).

The reduced model consisted of four predictors: street type, risk, occupational status and outside playspace (Table 5). The model explained 51.3 percent of the variance ($\Lambda = .482731$; $P = .002$). The higher the neighbourhood risk level, the less likely children were to like most of their classmates ($p = .001$), and the more likely they were to have one best friend rather than to like a number of friends equally (p = .020). A plotting of these two items against the risk scores of the 18 school districts showed that it was the two lowest risk and the four highest risk areas that stood out from all others. Children in the highest risk area differed markedly from those in the second highest, and there was a further gap between this and the next two highest. In the highest risk neighbourhood barely half (53 percent) of children liked most of their classmates, compared to an average of 88 percent over all other areas. Best friends were reported by 47 percent of children in the three highest risk areas, compared to only 21 percent in the three lowest risk areas (the average over the remaining areas was 37.8 percent).

Children in the higher risk areas were also somewhat more likely to play with friends after school and during weekends (85 percent in the three highest risk areas compared with 58 percent in the three lowest (p = .005)); but were less likely to be described by their parents as getting along well with other children.

The children living in commercial/industrial/mixed streets were more likely than other children to describe themselves as often feeling lonely (24 percent compared to 6 percent, p = .001) and described themselves as less readily chosen when teams for games were being picked (p = .001). Almost one quarter (24.3 percent) of children living in industrial streets but only nine percent in residential streets reported that they were "one of the last picked" for games. The children from industrial streets were also less likely to like most of their classmates (11.0 percent vs 24.3 percent, p = .001), an understandable reaction to what appears to be a pattern of rejection by peers.

Occupational status was associated with the number of friends that the child reported playing with regularly (p = .012) and with the child's being friendly with adults outside the family (p = .001). The mean values indicate that it is the children in the highest occupational category who stand out on these items. This group of children nominated an average of 9.2 regular playmates, compared with a range of [illegible] to 6.7 among the children of other occupational groups.

Children who lived in homes without outside playspace were much less likely to play with friends out of school (47 percent compared with 71 percent of other children) and were considered by parents to get along less well than others with other children (p = .001). They were also more likely than others to mention playing with unspecified "others", but such reports were relatively rare and not very meaningful. Absence of playspace was correlated with risk (r = .20, p = .000) but had an opposite effect to the latter (which as noted above was significantly associated with more out of school peer play). This apparent contradiction probably arises from the fact that only a small minority of children (5.6 percent) were rated as having no outside playspace available.

This pattern of findings suggests that in respect of social relations, street type is once again the best single sociodemographic predictor of maladjustment. Risk level of neighbourhood - a somewhat less immediate layer of the child's ecology - is associated with breadth of friendship networks, as is occupational status. The small group of children living in premises without outside playspace do not present the picture of loneliness and unpopularity that marks the non-residential street children, but they do miss out on out-of-school peer activities.

Of the predictors not retained in the final model, non-Anglo immigrant status (and the associated variable of rural background) was associated with less liking of classmates, less adult friendships outside the family, and less out of school play. With respect to housing upkeep it is once again the children living in housing better or worse than that of neighbours who present the most negative picture. These children were particularly unlikely to play with friends out of school (48 percent vs 25 percent of all other children) or to like most of their classmates (74 percent vs. 92.5 percent) and were more likely to have friends who didn't know each other (12.5 percent vs 2.7 percent). Lower income was associated with reports of loneliness and not liking classmates, but not in a linear fashion; children in the very lowest income bracket differ from all others on these items (18 percent vs 6 percent and 23 percent vs 10 percent). Boys report larger playgroups than girls as is common for children of this age, but there are no other significant sex differences. Children both of whose parents were of rural background were less likely to like most classmates (75 percent vs 89 percent). As previously noted, all of these variables are correlated with those retained in the final model.

DISCUSSION

The findings demonstrate the value and feasibility of applying ecological concepts to the study of child development. Several aspects of the child's immediate living environment, and in particular street type and the associated variable of housing upkeep emerged as powerful predictors of emotional and social adjustment. Our broader measure of environmental quality - neighbourhood risk level - was also a significant predictor, but less pervasive in its influence than street type. These environmental variables were found to exert their influence on developmental outcomes over and above that of the family's personal socioeconomic and immigrant status. In answer to Garbarino's comment that "if we can identify communities and neighbourhoods with characteristics that make them high risk places for families, then we can predict that social pathology among their families will be high", one clear guideline at least can be offered - look to the children living in commercial and industrial streets. The small minority of such children, especially those in inner city areas, stood out from all others in their feelings of loneliness, dislike of other children and feelings of rejection, worry, fear, anger and unhappiness.

What interpretation is to be put on this finding? Is it the effect of the immediate environment itself that puts children at high risk of maladjustment, or is it something to do with the nature of families that come to live in such localities? The obtained pattern of small but significant inter-correlations between street type and a number of other variables suggest that the industrial and commercial streets - or at least some of them - are attracting particular kinds of family. The interview protocols confirmed the implication in the data that a number of these parents were small shopkeepers, often working long hours, often of limited education, often of non-English speaking background, and often living above the shop, which was in better kept condition than rundown premises nearby. Other families were living in the same run-down premises because of the relatively low rents. This picture does not of course tell us which of these aspects had most psychological impact on the child. A different kind of analysis is required to establish this.

Areal risk also had an impact, but of a somewhat different kind.

Those children who lived in high risk areas, but not necessarily in industrial streets, showed a pattern of social constriction rather than maladjustment. They were less likely to like most of their classmates, more likely to concentrate their affections on one best friend rather than liking a number of children equally, less likely to be regarded by their parents as getting along well with other children, and were somewhat less happy than average about their friends. The association with neighbourhood risk is not however linear. In the twelve "middling" school districts, there were no differences in the children's self-reports. It was only in the highest risk areas, and in particular in the very highest, a run down inner city area, that liking for other children faltered. Similarly it was only in the lowest risk areas, which were spacious fairly recently developed outer suburbs, where the children had access to a wide range of out of school activities (several for example had their own horses) that the incidence of "best friends" declined. It seems then that "ordinary" suburban life in today's Western cities promotes a generally positive attitude towards other children, with a little over one-third of children at any one time being in a "best friendship"; but that growing up in a rough neighbourhood constricts these positive attitudes, and increases the likelihood that a single person will be selected as an intimate. It also suggests that growing up in a privileged semi-rural environment dilutes the need for such close exclusive friendships, perhaps by providing alternative affective ties (one child commented that "because I've been brought up with animals I love them as well as my friends"). This finding is however at odds with that of Berg and Medrich in a Californian sample (Rubin, 1980) in which exclusive friendships were typical of upper middle children and "extensive" social networks of poor inner city children. It is likely, however, that the differences between our high and low risk area children are not as extreme as those between the inner city and upper middle children in the American study.

Availability of playspace, although correlated with street type exerted an effect independent of and opposite to high rise living, and seems to pick out a small group of children living in inappropriately designed multi-story dwellings which have in effect isolated them from their peers. Occupational status was as expected correlated with risk, but displayed independent predictive power. Children from the highest status, upper-middle class families stand out from all others in having a larger than average number of playmates and in possessing adult friends that they like to spend time with and talk to. These findings suggest that these parents are inducting their children into a generally enriched world of social connections.

Children from the lowest occupational categories - unskilled and unemployed - also stand out from the general sample, although for most outcomes included in the study neighbourhood quality is a more powerful predictor than personal occupational status at the lower end of the spectrum. In the case of worry and fear however occupation is more salient. One reason was made clear by the interview protocols- a number of the less skilled fathers were in hazardous jobs, for example as taxi drivers or in factories with poor industrial records, and the children feared for their safety.

Responses to the measures of life areas satisfaction were very positively skewed, so that the variability on these measures was limited. This need not necessarily be regarded as a disadvantage, since the effect, in the present carefully-drawn sample, was to discriminate out from all others the small group of high risk children. It is worth noting that the studies carried out by the U.S. Foundation for Child Development using the same measure have obtained the strong positive skew (Lash and Sigal, 1976; Lash , Sigal and Didzinski, 1980; Zill, 1983). The FCD data has not been analysed in the manner used in the present study, so that no further parallel can be drawn.

The measures of worry, fear, anger and unhappiness showed greater variance than the life areas, and many of the findings here have already been discussed; however the sex differences merit some further comment. It came as no surprise that the girls reported different kinds of fears and worries to the boys, as this sex difference has been noted by researchers since the 1920s (McCandless and Evans, 1974). More central to the study's aim was the finding that some of the more socially-inspired fears (for instance of staying home without adults as protection, of being attacked on the streets, and of father) were more common among the girls in the high risk areas and those living in industrial streets. Whilst not all these areal effects reached statistical significance, in part due to small cell frequencies, it seems clear that environmental disadvantage is especially noxious to girls.

Angry feelings, also more commonly experienced by girls, were sparked off by a whole range of put-downs and needlings, particularly altercations with sibs, and teasing from boys, the latter being a much more common complaint among high risk and industrial street girls. This interesting finding suggests that early sexual hostility and hazing is a feature of high risk environments.

Although space limitations prevent an exploration of the social policy implications of the findings, we will have achieved at least one useful thing if the paper goes some distance towards convincing the reader that ecological variables, and an ecological perspective, are important in an understanding of the emotional and social well-being of children. As R.E. Pahl has noted, sociologists (and, we might add, many other social scientists):

> "....tend to underrate the importance of locality and implicitly or explicitly claim that class and life-cycle characteristics are sufficient to explain differences in ways of life" (Pahl, 1973: 110).

Perhaps demonstrating the importance of aspects of neighbourhood quality has one further practical consequence: it points towards community or neighbourhood level action as one appropriate strategy for improving the quality of life of children and families. Although such action appears to be somewhat out of fashion at the moment, it seems difficult to ignore the evidence that high risk areas, particularly in the inner city, present a unique combination of problems. The disharmony, even conflict, between children in the highest risk areas seems to reflect, on a small scale, the social disorganisation and inter-personal conflict which is so characteristic of life as a whole in these areas. Indeed it is possible to see these children as direct products of a social system which, particularly through the housing and employment markets, creates a structure of disadvantage which damages individuals psychologically and materially and undermines their social relationships. It seems unlikely that remote control action from Canberra will be sufficient to repair this kind of damage.

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TABLE 1. Life Areas Satisfaction: Mean scores by street type and risk level of the neighbourhood.

Street Type		N	Percentage unhappy with:				Life Areas Satisfaction Score[1]
			Self	Schoolwork	Friends	Family	
Commercial/Industrial/ Mixed		39	35.9	61.5	7.7	10.3	1.15
Residential		282	30.5	46.4	7.1	4.6	.88
Risk Level							
Low	1	37	21.6	40.5	2.7	0.0	.65
	2	110	30.9	47.3	.9	4.6	.84
	3	65	29.2	50.8	12.3	3.1	.95
	4	38	40.5	37.8	13.5	5.4	.97
	5	38	26.3	50.0	13.2	10.5	1.00
High	6	34	41.2	64.7	8.8	11.8	1.26
Total		321	31.2	48.3	7.2	5.3	0.92

[1] A score of zero indicates happiness or satisfaction with all four life areas. The maximum score of four indicates unhappiness with all life areas.

TABLE 2. Significant associations between predictor variables and life satisfaction areas, (1) for each predictor fitted on its own, and (2) for each predictor adjusted for all others.

Life Area	(1) Predictors fitted individually			(2) Predictors adjusted for all others		
	Predictor	p	R^2 (%)	Predictor	p	sr^2 (%)
Self	Religion	.018	5.2	Religion	.027	4.6
				Father's education	.017	4.5
				Child's age	.026	2.1
				Housing upkeep	.030	3.1
Schoolwork	Child's sex	.003	2.7	Child's sex	.004	2.6
	Total children in family	.015	1.8			
Friends	Religion	.025	5.0	Risk	.057	2.4
Family	Single parents	.019	3.7	Street type	.018	1.7
				Family income	.032	2.7
All areas summated	Risk	.013	3.3	Father's education	.014	1.7
	Family income	.014	3.3	Street type	.032	1.3
	Housing upkeep	.035	3.2			
	Religion	.036	4.6			

TABLE 3. Emotional adjustment: Mean scores by street type and risk level of neighbourhood.

Percentage often:

Street Type		N	Worried	Afraid	Angry	Unhappy with life	Negative emotions score[1]
Commercial/Industrial/ Mixed		39	38.5	25.6	33.3	30.8	1.28
Residential		282	16.7	21.0	14.2	18.8	.61
Risk Level							
Low	1	37	8.1	8.1	21.6	16.2	.54
	2	110	22.7	13.6	10.0	20.0	.66
	3	65	20.0	10.7	21.5	23.1	.75
	4	37	16.2	13.5	21.6	21.6	.73
	5	38	13.2	10.5	15.8	15.8	.55
High	6	34	29.4	20.6	17.6	23.5	.93
Total		321	19.3	12.7	16.5	20.3	.69

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[1] A score of zero indicates the absence of all negative emotions. The maximum score of four indicates the choice of the "extreme" score on all four items.

TABLE 4. Significant associations between predictor variables and negative emotions, (1) for each predictor fitted on its own, and (2) for each predictor adjusted for all others.

	(1) Predictors fitted individually			(2) Predictors adjusted for all others		
Negative emotion	Predictor	P	R^2 (%)	Predictor	P	sr^2 (%)
Worry	Street Type	.001	3.3	Street Type	.018	1.7
	Immigrant status	.017	3.7	Occupational status	.039	4.5
	Religion	.025	4.9			
	Father's education	.032	4.3			
	Housing upkeep	.049	3.0			
Fear	Street Type	.001	2.1	Street Type	.055	1.1
	Occupational status	.012	5.5	Occupational status	.008	5.6
	Family income	.028	2.8	Father's education	.038	3.9
	Father's education	.051	3.9			
Anger	Street Type	.002	2.8	Street Type	.005	2.5
	Child's sex	037	1.4	Child's sex	.015	1.8
Overall life rating	Total children in family	.031	1.4	Total children in family	.069	1.0
				Mother's employment status	.052	1.2
Summed negative emotions	Street Type	.000	5.4	Street Type	.001	3.1
	Family Income	.020	3.1	Occupational status	.012	5.1
	Housing upkeep	.039	3.1	Child's sex	.046	1.1
	Religion	.048	4.4			
	Occupational status	.056	4.3			

TABLE 5. Sources of Worry, Fear and Anger by sex of child.

	Boys	Girls	Significant Predictors	
Sources of worry	(%)	(%)	Predictor	p
Family	83	88		
Schooltests	75	77		
Getting sick or hurt	58	67		
Friends not liking you	49	67	G > B	002
Growing up	38	42		
Staying home without adults	25	48	G > B	0000
Being picked on	28	28		
Sources of fear				
Somebody bad getting into house	68	87	G > B	0001
Parents fighting	53	73	G > B	0004
Spiders, insects, etc.	44	67	G > B	0001
Horror movies	40	63	G > B	0001
The dark	40	50		-
Someone might hurt you when go outdoors	27	43	G > B	006
Non-family adults	27	32	$G_{HR} > G_{LR}$	01
Cats and dogs	24	27		
Thunder & lightning	12	29	G > B	0001
Television violence	7	29	G > B	0000
Father	8	13	G > B $G_{HR} > G_{LR}$	.09 .11
Sources of Anger				
Sibling conflict	73	77		
Being picked on by other children	41	48		
Lack of attention	49	59	G > B	.08
When you have trouble learning	40	50	G > B	.03
Siblings favored	46	51		
Opposite-sex teasing	23	56	G > B $G_{HR} > G_{LR}$	.0000 .01
Losing games	26	51		

HR = High risk LR = Low risk

TABLE 6. Association between predictor variables and children's social adjustment for each predictor variable: fitted on its own and for the reduced model.

Each predictor variable fitted on its own				Reduced model (each variable adjusted for all others)		
Significant Predictors	Significant items	p	R^2 (%	Λ	$\eta^2 = 1 - \Lambda$ (%)	p
Street type	Often lonely	001	3.49	.916	8.4	.016
	Chosen for games	001	3.54			
	Likes classmates	002	1.78			
Risk	One best friend	020	3.18	.819	18.1	.014
	Likes classmates	001	5.34			
	Gets along well	085	2.17			
	Plays with friends out of school	072	2.29			
Occupational status	Number of playmates	012	5.85			
	Adult friends	001	7.52	.683	31.7	.030
Outside playspace	Plays with friends our of school	039	1.40	.928	7.2	.047
	Plays with others	006	2.48			
	Gets along well	048	1.28			
	Likes classmates	029	1.55			
Immigration status	Likes classmates	013	4.12			
	Adult friends	003	5.24			
	Plays with friends out of school	059	2.97			
Housing upkeep	Likes classmates	000	9.10			
	Plays with family members	027	3.57			
	Friends know each other	001	5.92			
Income	Often lonely	034	2.49			
	Likes classmates	030	2.93			
	One best friend	080	2.22			
Sex of child	Number of playmates	054	1.22			
Type of school	Number of playmates	049	1.27			
	Plays by self out of school	062	1.14			
Parental background	Likes classmates	053	1.93			

The effects of children on family life in New Zealand and Australia

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When two adults contract into a family partnership, whether it be via legal marriage or a defacto relationship,* they move into a fairly intensive period of negotiation of rights and obligations with regard to their 'wife' and 'husband' roles, and their family and work roles to reach arrangements which both regard as legitimate, as valid. Generally, this is a period when they 'settle down' and get 'set up' (Richards, 1978), and there may not be much effort put into establishing a relationship between the family and the neighbourhood community. Not all families get 'set up' before having children. In Wellington, the New Zealand Council for Educational Research study of family support networks found that 75 percent of the families had moved house since the woman became pregnant with her first child, thus precluding the family from forming a relationship with the community until children arrive.

The initial activity is mostly a balancing of personal. work and couple needs. Both have paid work and have fun together and/or separately during leisure hours and perhaps also work on their block and house. For each, activities are done serially with reasonable conformity and harmony with their partner's pattern. At this stage, there may not be much role segregation inside the home with both sharing in domestic production (housework) and consumption activities, but there is likely to be considerable segregation between paid work outside the home and home commitments (with potential for some conflict). Gowler and Legge (1978) talk about a hidden marriage contract which has to be negotiated to resolve any conflicting work and family negotiations. The three most common contracts are:

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* 7.6% of Australian adults aged 18 - 35 years in the Institute of Family Studies Family Formation Study were 'living together.'

- conventional marriage (husband has career, wife stays at home)
- working-couple marriage (husband is primary wage earner and wife is secondary wage earner and also 'works' at home)
- dual career marriages (husband and wife have similar commitments to their jobs outside the home and there is more sharing of domestic work and leisure).

Transition To Parenthood

When the first baby arrives, the balancing of activities becomes far more complex. La Rossa and La Rossa (1981) provide a useful model of the variables which may produce conflict between parents who are the main caregivers of young babies.

I am proposing today to modify and extend La Rossa and La Rossa's conflict model further to allow for the situation of all parents being in paid employment and therefore grappling with child care issues. I intend testing the model against some data from the Wellington Family Network project (in progress) and to gain some additional insights from Australian research; particularly the Institute of Family Studies' Geelong Social Support Networks study (Storer et al, 1983), Lyn Richards' Having Families (1978) and Peter d'Abbs doctoral thesis (1983).

In Australia and New Zealand, and other Anglo-saxon cultures, it it is agreed that helpless infants need continuous supervision 24 hours per day and so a roster is set up to cater for this supervision. The parent acting as the primary caregiver cannot make good progress with personal/leisure activities or domestic work unless the infant is sleeping (in which case the parent is still 'on call', supervising at the secondary level) or unless someone else spells them off and gives them 'down time', thus allowing them to move into the tertiary supervision state (La Rossa and La Rossa, op cit). Free time is a scarce resource for parents of infants.

- INSERT FIGURE 1 HERE -

Lack of free time may not be a problem. Caregivers who are not strongly influenced by pressures on them to do things for themselves, do not find themselves in a conflict situation. Generally these are women in 'conventional' marriages who accept a division of labour is legitimate. They fit the model of the 'old' good mother in Lyn Richards' typology of families (1978, p.294) who is passive, patient, devoted, busy and 'there' (Richards, c1980). Such caregivers combine child care activities with personal, wifely and housewifely activities. Gone are the days of doing activities serially.

However, for parents who want or need time out from being continuously 'there' for children - and research shows that these days most English-speaking parents do for a variety of reasons - a substitute caregiver has to be found. If there is a second parent in the family, it is usually him or her who does this for infants; friends and relatives take over more when the children grow older. Parents' desire for 'down time' can often come at the same time, causing conflict. One solution is to use formal child care, but this is the option least often considered unless both parents are employed outside the home.

- INSERT FIGURE 2 HERE -

Work and Family Life

Nowadays in Australia and New Zealand, the majority of urban families with children under the age of 5 years have periods of time when all parents (including one-parent families) are in the paid labour force. When this occurs, the balancing of activities has to be renegotiated. For the main caregiver, usually the mother, one more activity is slotted into an already busy schedule (possibly requiring other activities to be dropped, condensed or passed over to someone else). For other family members, some responsibilities of the main caregiver are taken over or, more likely, helped with. In addition to the practical rearrangements, there has to be a readjustment of what Richards (c.1980) calls 'family style'. The knot of norms about the mother role gets tugged and changed by the reasembling of the knot of norms for the worker role, because both are entangled with one another (and with the kinds associated with norms about family structures and the wife role). These set of norms may clash causing conflict within that individual.

Richards suggests most individual family styles are somewhere between the 'old family style' and the 'new family style' - they are 'nowadays families'. Changes along this continuum are mostly, in my view, triggered by work force participation behaviours, (which for women are frequently associated with family life cycle changes). When both the parents move into the paid labour force, the family style tends towards the 'new' style. When one parent - usually the father - in a working-couple family accepts a job transfer to a location where the other can't find paid employment, the family style may move from 'new' towards 'old'. Such behaviour may indicate that there was a common family style only under certain conditions. Different styles within families may also become evident when the wife/mother thinks she'd like to work outside the home but the husband forbids it or undermines the woman's efforts to gain employment. This conflict behaviour mostly revolves around child care and around associated beliefs about children's needs.

The Studies

Let me describe the scope of the New Zealand Family Networks project briefly. The project is an in-depth study of 68 randomly-selected and seemingly 'typical' families living in greater Wellington. The aim is to find out which people and agencies comprise the social network of parents raising children aged 0 to 5 years. At a later stage, we intend checking the implications for the well-being of these children. The emphasis is on collecting parents' own views of what helps and what hinders them in their parenting. I use the present tense because the Stage 2 interviews - those with the partners of the main caregivers - are still in progress. The families themselves nominated who mostly cared for the young children. To be classed as a family for the purposes of this study, there had to be at least one parent (or substitute parent) and at least one child living together. That means a variety of structures - two parents with children, one parent with children and extended families - and a variety of sizes (but mostly two children), spacings and stages. Only 33 families had pre-schoolers only. There was a bias towards middle class, higher income families in the sample. Also, we failed to include two Pacific Island families who were drawn, because of a language barrier.

For Stage 1, when the main caregiver was studied, three visits to that person were made. The first visit involved a fairly standard bibliographical questionnaire, plus some questions about being a parent and patterns of daily living. A seven-day diary was left for the caregiver to note all contacts. The second visit involved gathering details about social network contacts noted in the diary and asking how the caregiver was supported in varying crises, and we explored more details of the family history and present style. The third interview again checked out social network information from a second diary, then gathered more systematic information on contacts with friends/neighbours, extended family and formal services. Finally, we attempted to tap the caregiver's views of possible family changes and any policy suggestions they had. Part of the first and all of the second and third interviews were taped. The Stage 2 visits to the partner involved two visits and only one diary. So far only the biographical data has been analyzed and it is to this data that I will refer to today, but I intend using one case study for illustrative purposes as well.

The Institute of Family Studies' Geelong study has quite similar aims but is not confined to one stage in the family life cycle and half no longer had young children. It aims "to investigate different individuals' perceptions of their needs, their use of... support networks..., and to set this in a social context of the structures and services provided... in their community" (Storer et al, 1983, p.12). The main survey used a structured interview schedule with some open-ended questions. In addition, 48 in-depth case studies were done. Lyn Richards, in her Heidelberg Study (1978), interviewed both parents separately in 60 two-parent families. She tape-recorded their views on getting married and having children and all had a first child aged either 5 years or a few months. Peter d'Abbs (1983) has also interviewed parents who had at least one child of pre-school age living in Melbourne. The sample of 20 included men and women, and middle income and low income families and each was interviewed on tape three or four times.

Woman's Employment and Child Care

In the Geelong study, the first report to respondents said 'few respondents made regular use of child care arrangements while they are at work and most of these arrange to leave their children with partners, relatives or friends,' (p.29). It would appear that either Geelong differs from Melbourne and Wellington with regard to mother's employment or the different life cycle stage of half the Geelong respondents was associated with the

Geelong researchers saying 'Most respondents, both men and women, were strongly of the opinion that mothers should stay at home with their pre-school children and should not work more than part-time once their childen were at school', (McCaughey, 1983, p.3). In contrast, Lyn Richard's sample comprised 55 per cent who said the wife would be or was working before the children were at school and our Wellington sample had 54 per cent of the main caregivers in paid employment or studying at the time of interview. In Wellington, job hours varied from 1 to 63 per week, but only seven (9 per cent) worked more than 20 hours. It is quite possible that most of the 16 caregivers (24 per cent) who had fewer than 10 paid hours per week did not regard themselves as working mothers. Thus, they could deny any clash of norms and join the chorus saying 'mothers should stay home with pre-school children'. The majority of the main caregivers who had paid employment did work irregular hours, most commonly (16 percent) arranged to fit around the family.

When asked about the effects of the caregivers' paid work on the family life, few of the Wellington participants cited negative effects - two disliked being separated from their children (they 'had' to work), two had partners who were negative, three felt their children did not get enough attention and four said they were over-tired.* Probably about half of these women were behaving like 'new style' mothers but still adhering to traditional norms. Certainly two partners were explicit about listening to old normative messages whilst finding their wives' behaviour at odds with these messages. When Richards asked 'What is a good mother?' those who fitted the 'old family' model were likely to describe women who didn't work in the formal economy, were 'always there', always thinking of the children's benefit and who 'spent the time required with their children' (1978, p.207). The Melbourne 'new style' mothers were concerned that mothers be given the change to develop their own individuality - for them, 'good mothers retain their own personality, for their own sakes and for the sake of their children,' (p.210). Thus, there is a risk of struggles within the family if the wife moves into the paid workforce but she or her partner believes in 'old style' mothers. The conflict potential can be reduced if both parents accept two-earners in one family is legitimate and or accept that children's needs can be met by a confident mother who has retained her individuality.

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* Note that these eleven negative comments did not necessarily come from eleven individuals.

Most of our Wellington caregivers in paid employment had reduced conflict to a not-worth-mentioning proportion, it seemed; perhaps because the struggle was behind them. Forty-five of the 56 effects from a dual-worker life-style cited were positive ones. In addition, 13 (of the 37 with jobs) said their paid employment had no effect on themselves, 24 said it had no effect on their partner and 18 said it had no effect on the children.

Looking at child care arrangements it seems that a lot of the normative conflict was reduced by arranging work schedules so that one or other parent could mind the children serially or by having a friend, neighbour or relative mind the children when both parents were absent. (Five families had two such arrangements patched together). Only five families used formal arrangements - four were with family day care schemes and the fifth used a creche at her workplace. This pattern endorses other social support network studies' findings which show that people believe in using family and friends for support in meeting everyday needs. Only in certain circumstances are outside formal agencies turned to as well - in the case of child care for paid employment reasons, it was when friends and family would not or could not help, (except when a creche was maintained by an employer). Lyn Richards' most recent study of social network processes in a new housing estate (1983) indicates that the processes which lead couples to realistically expect to set up regular help such as child care are very complex indeed.

Men's Employment and Child Care

Most of the debate about child care needs are associated with examinations only of women's employment patterns. La Rossa and La Rossa's model indicates that it is each (that is, both) parent's use of free time that has to be considered to understand conflict within the home over child care and free time. The Wellington Family Networks data suggests that fathers' use of time for paid work can also lead to conflict within the home over child care, free time and/or women's employment time. Husbands (or wives for the two house fathers) were the modal type of carer when the main caregiver was in paid employment, but various other people added together cared for more children than did partners. Friends and relatives were the important sources of child care support for personal time. These data are not surprising when the partners' employment hours were examined. All had full-time employment and just under half worked hours which differed from a standard 40 hour week. The irregularities were mostly extended hours, but eight had shift or irregular hours and six brought paper work home quite often. Only one woman said that her husband's work hours were tailored to fit the family. More of the fathers* feel that their hours have been changed to give them more time with their family.

The main caregivers, when asked to comment on the effect of their partner's work on the family mostly said 'no effect' or cited negative effects. (Perhaps the positive ones were taken for granted?) Eighty per cent said work had no effect on their partner, 40 per cent said their partner's work did not effect them (the respondent), but only 26 per cent felt their partner's work had no effect on the family (read, children). Only 21 of the 105 effects cited were positive, and the most common positive statements were to do with work hours: flexible work hours (six people) or shorter working hours (five people). Two other statements are relevant to the issue of the partner sharing child care responsibilities - namely the partner working near to home (two) and the partner being able to take the children to work (four). Negative comments were mostly about work pressures.

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* Remember these interviews are still in progress.

One of the strongest pleas I have seen for a better balance of work, recreation and family commitments came from an Australian mother of two. She agreed to do a case study interview for the Institute of Family Studies Family Formation project (in progress). She said 'His selfishness bothers me. I can understand it, but it bothers me because I can see his work is taxing. Therefore I can see he wants time to himself. But he has got a wife and family. He's also got to find time for those but he doesn't seem to find as much time for those as I think he should... I've told him in straight words. I've said I don't mind if you have nights and Saturday to yourself, but Sundays you should try and spend with the family... I can see his point of view. I would just like him to try and realise that being at home all day with the kids can be just as tiring as dealing with adults at work'.

Another effect of partner's work on main caregivers of children and consequently for their behaviour as women, mothers and paid workers was the mobility of the families because of the partner being transferred or taking a new job in a different location. Seventeen percent of the Wellington sample had moved since starting a family for this reason, and not always without some conflict. This is another of the hidden contracts discussed by Gowler and Legge (op cite).

Family Conflicts of Interest When Raising Young Children

In order to use the La Rossa and La Rossa model beyond the transition-to-parenthood stage, additions to it are necessary. I have modified it thus:

- INSERT FIGURE 3 HERE -

I personally prefer to say that the variables in the model are associated with struggles in the family, (Hartmann, 1981). The values (noted above the line) have potential for increaasing the conflict of interest between parents, whilst acceptance of certain ideological stances (noted below the line) can reduce the potential for conflict. Most parents in the Wellington Family Networks Project had modified their apportionment of time to work, housework, family and personal/leisure activities until a reasonable compromise had been reached and each felt satisfied or resigned to their family style. There are differences in these arrangements according to the labour force status of the women according to time budget studies (Forer & Viney, c.1975).

One Caregiver's Story

Marie's and Jon's case study describes some of the processes that occur inside families to reduce the struggle to a satisfactory level. In addition, it illustrates the need for social analysts to look at both material circumstances and the ideology of the family to understand how society is shaping family life and how, in turn, families make some impact on the nature of society (Mitchell, 1971). Marie recognised the formal economy and the home as two separate 'worlds' (Bernard, 1981) and had her own grounded theory about the way they impinged on one another. She recognised that within each 'world' choice is possible and yet other 'worlds' constrain and limit choices (Fischer et al, 1982). As Piotrkowski put it, this family 'absorbed' the tensions and conflicts inherent in selling 'their labour to external work enterprises and utilizing it in providing household goods and services' (1978, p.275), in particular child care.

Marie was born in an Western European country but emigrated with her working class family to New Zealand when aged 10 years. She married Jon when he finished his degree in engineering. He came from another country specifically for a New Zealand university education. They have two children: a son just about to start school and a 2 and a half year old daughter. He earns good money and they own their house and a flat, but live very modestly in order to save money for trips to see his family every few years.

The constant demands of a young baby was a real shock to Marie when she first had Victor after years in paid employment. She said 'I don't think education prepares you (for parenthood)... You are not prepared for the amount of time they take...; they are constantly demanding especially on the mother, all the time. When Anne arrived 'she was really difficult' but even so 'she just slotted in with everything and it was fine'. The struggle to adapt to little time for herself was almost resolved. The partners had worked out a routine for child caring, for working and recreating to a reasonably satisfactory level. Marie stayed at home and joined the 'women's world' and Jon continued with his career and helped a little at home.

Marie had a 'diversified' social network (d'Abbs, 1983). She relied on a number of people, all women, to give her help and day-to-day support to meet companionship, occasional day-time babysitting and transport needs. Her closest friend was visited rarely. Each week she attended a small, supportive playgroup (which was 'more for the mothers') and played mid-week netball with a practice the day before. The children always went along too, so Marie was still 'on call' to her children. When the family joined the study, Marie had been a traditional 'old style' wife and mother for five years.

Jon works long hours during the week and often goes to work on Saturdays too, (sometimes taking Victor with him). This contributed to her saying 'We (Jon and I) operate as separate units it you see what I mean'. She was referring to the physical separation of family and work in capitalist societies. And yet despite this separation, Marie felt a lot of pressure from Jon's job on the family. He works about 45 hours per week and it has been virtually impossible to get a holiday away because of continuous deadlines. One of Marie's dreams was 'that my husband will have a bit more time with us and not always at work'. A little later she said 'Marriage is rather interesting, isn't it, because you are so close and yet you become more and more apart. You operate as two different people (him in the career world, her in the family world) which is dangerous in some ways... My husband is very much involved in work. I do foresee that if he gets a promotion I will be, (she paused) upset; because it will mean more time away... As I say to him 'Sometimes I feel you're married to your work and not to me' and that can be dangerous. I feel they, (employers) are not in any way geared towards the family. ...At times I feel I've had to pull him back into the family - to keep him in.

More and more phone calls had been coming in to the home for Jon from his firm, so they were adopting avoidance tactics. At the weekend, Marie answers the phone first and says 'He's not in'. The other, more major, strategy was Marie taking an evening job four days per week. She is able to satisfy 'old' norms because one or other parents is always with the children. Jon comes home at 5 p.m. and had, as a result, stopped his boss from starting meetings at 4.45 p.m. The family has a quick meal together and Marie goes to the factory from 6.00 to 10.00 p.m. On Friday there is no shift so she gives Jon 'down' time from family and work responsibilities and he goes to the pub. Marie and the children share a take-away meal with the only cooperating neighbour in her social network on Fridays. Jon also has 'down' time on Sundays when he has a game of squash. This change to both their use of time has meant 'Jon is now part of the family. I didn't think it would have such an impact. Before he did not do much in the way of bringing up the children... The job is great, in the sense that I do not feel in any way responsible for the kids during that time. I feel completely safe with Jon here. If somebody else had to look after them I'd not feel at ease. Also, if either of the children is sick we can look after them'. This 'nowadays' family has many 'old' style ways.

Her paid work is divorced from the home and family and yet it impacted on the family, mostly in positive ways. The main disadvantage had been reduced husband-wife time. Marie is determined that Jon's work will not jeopardize her job; even though 'the money is only a little bit of pocket money', the job had considerable significance. She had planned for the possibility of Jon going for work overseas trips and a conflict of interest arising. Her mother would come and stay from a southern city but, interestingly, 'if Mum can't come, it would be a matter of Jon's firm paying for a babysitter, I've made that clear. It won't be a great deal of money for the firm paying a babysitter but it would be a great deal out of my wages'. I sought clarification and asked 'So you feel that if the firm takes away your companion and babysitter, they should help you?' and Marie replied emphatically 'Yes, definitely'. She had seen the strong connection between the capitalist world and the family and was resisting being exploited too heavily.

This family had resolved most potential conflicts. Marie had adjusted to the 'old family style' after a good deal of distress in the first six months of parenthood. When she stepped towards the 'new family style' she arranged her paid work to make serial child care by the parents possible, thereby avoiding upsetting the old norms held by her and Jon. He in turn had gotten satisfaction from his increased family responsibilities and it provided a legitimate reason to decrease his paid work hours, and for her to have some 'down' time. However she still desired a little 'down' time for herself, for Marie the person. She said wistfully and poignantly, 'Sometimes I still feel being a parent is very, very difficult. You are always responsible. I really love my kids but, (pauses to choose her words) it's kind of a funny thing (pauses again), sometimes I just feel I would like to be by muself and that is an opportunity I rarely get - to go for a walk along the beach by myself, to anywhere by myself.' The household and employment systems were so closely interlocking that Marie had difficulty moving outside the constraints of these structures which were competing for her time and energy. She expressed feelings of strain. And yet like most families in all the studies cited today, Marie and Jon were managing and 'absorbing' these strains.

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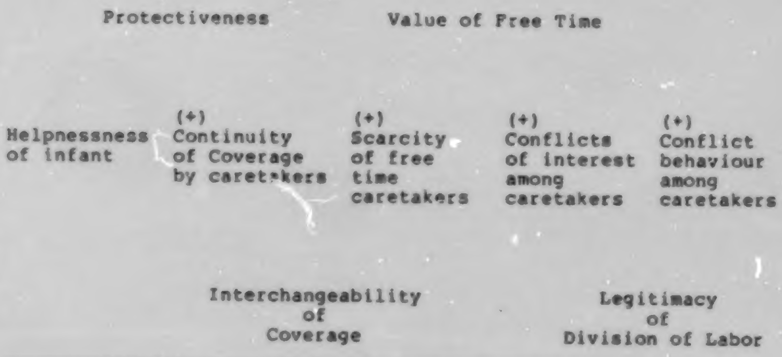
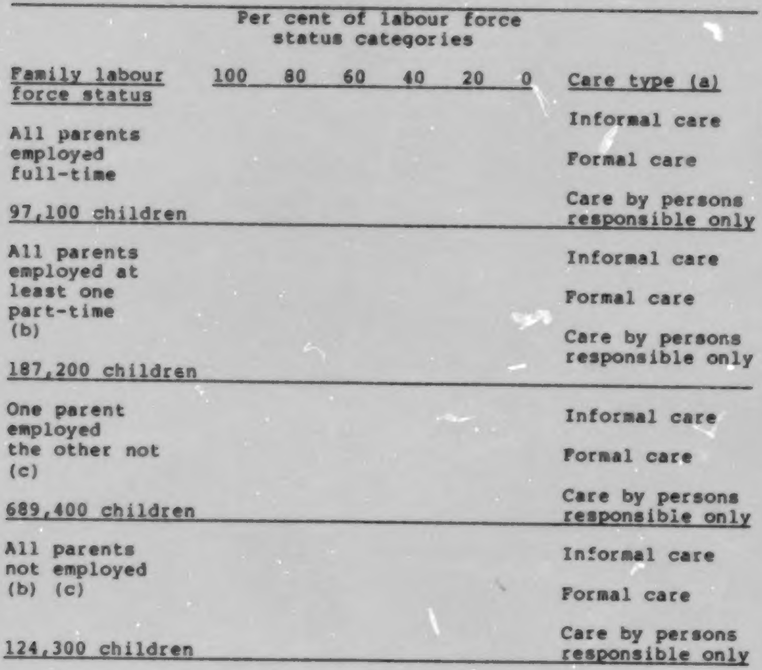
FIGURE 1: A Conflict Sociological Model of the Transition to Parenthood


Protectiveness
Value of Free Time
Helpnessness of infant
(+) Continuity of Coverage by caretakers
(+) Scarcity of free time caretakers
(+) Conflicts of interest among caretakers
(+) Conflict behaviour among caretakers
Interchangeability of Coverage
Legitimacy of Division of Labor

SOURCE: La Rossa and La Rossa, op cit.

FIGURE 2: Children under 12 years of age not attending school: Family labour force status by care type, June 1980.



SOURCE: Australian Bureau of Statistics, Child care arrangements Australia June 1980, p.7.

(a) Although not defined as care in this survey, the category 'care by person responsible' has been included in this diagram for ease of analysis.

(b) Note that children of one parent families are counted in 'All parents....' depending on that parent's labour force status.

(c) Comprises unemployed persons and those not in the labour force.

FIGURE 3: Family Stuggles: a modified version of La Rossa and La Rossa's conflict model

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Value of good standard of living and opportunities

Value women retaining individuality

Value of free time

Continuity of coverage by caregivers

Scarcity of free time for caregivers

Conflict of interests

Struggle amongst caregiver

AND/OR

Interchangeability of coverage

Legitimacy of one working longer hours

Legitimacy of both in paid labour force

Legitimacy of division of labour inside home

A comparison of attitudes to childrearing of parents of handicapped and non-handicapped children

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The expectations of parents serve as a child's first criteria for success. When the required behaviours are reasonable, both parties can enjoy their relationship and develop self-confidence. If instead parents make unrealistic demands, the likely result is mutual frustration and insecurity. Fortunately, intuition is not the only source mothers and fathers rely on in deciding what to expect of children. They also consider the collective viewpoint or norm for their reference group as a valuable source of guidance. Sometimes of course parents disagree with the group perception. But overall most families are grateful that they have access to normative standards when making decisions.

To be without norms is to be alone in the worst sense because one does not know the criteria by which to evaluate behaviour, judge progress or determine achievement.

This undesirable situation describes the present experience of many families who are raising intellectually handicapped children. For them the growth pattern of normal children represents an inappropriate standard. The group should have its own norms drawn from a population resembling themselves. Only then can parents acquire the sense of assurance and teaching skills necessary to maximize their child's development.

Our previous research has shown that parents of intellectually handicapped children in Australia and the United States express essentially the same child-rearing expectations (Strom, et.al., 1981:1983). By itself this agreement does not reveal how much parents of the intellectually handicapped differ from parents of non-handicapped children. In order to identify the common and separate attitudes held by these two groups, we conducted the present study.

PROCEDURES

The comparison samples were 344 parents of non-handicapped children (mean age = 4 years, 6 months) in Melbourne, Australia and 101 parents of intellectually handicapped youngsters (mean age = 5 years, 8 months) from Canberra, the national capital. Most of the handicapped sons and daughters had been diagnosed as Down's Syndrome or brain damaged (Rees, 1982). The socio-economic distribution which appears in Table 1 was based on the principal income earner's occupation in each family.

TABLE 1 in here

During an interview with a trained examiner, each of the 445 subjects were administered the Parent As A Teacher Inventory (P.A.A.T.). This attidudinal scale enables parents to reveal their expectations for 3 to 9 year olds and targets value preferences concerning specific child behaviour. In order to facilitate interpretation and feedback, the items are clustered into these five subsets: Creativity, Frustration, Control, Play and Teaching-Learning.

The Creativity subset shows parental support for child fantasy and imaginative behaviour. The Frustration subset seeks to identify disappointments which parents experience because of expectations that are inconsistent with the child's developmental needs.

Feelings outlining the scope of child control that parents require are dealt with in the Control subset. The Play subset addresses parental understanding of this activity as an influence on child development. The final subset, Teaching-Learning, measures parental perception of their ability to facilitate academic readiness at home. Ten items, designed to consider each ofthese five subsets make a composite P.A.A.T. of fifty items.

Scoring the inventory calls for assigning a numeral value of 4, 3, 2 or [illegible] each of the responses. The most desired responses based upon child development research are valued 4, with diminishing values assigned to other responses on the basis of their distance from the most desirable. A complete description of the P.A.A.T. including reliability and validity has been reported earlier (Strom, 1982). Internal consistency of P.A.A.T. responses for the two parent samples was measured by the alpha coefficient, a generalization of the Kuder-Richardson Formula 20. The item-total reliability of both groups was relatively high with alpha for parents of the non-handicapped equal to .83 and .85 for parents of the handicapped.

Similarities and differences between the two parent groups were determined by applying a one-way analysis of variance and a discriminant analysis. Subset profiles of childrearing expectations were then devised by restating all fifty of the P.A.A.T. inventory items in an abbreviated and positive form and plotting the mean score of each item on a continuum. The range of possible responses included a selected mid-point value of 2.5 which differentiates unfavourable scores (1.0-2.5) from favourable scores (above 2.5). A baseline pattern of group responses was established to provide a normative framework of parental expectations by group. This technique allows researchers to graphically represent parental strengths and needs over time and plan appropriate intervention.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The analysis of variance findings presented in Table 2 show that the parent groups differed significantly on total mean scores and all subsets ($p < .0001$) except Frustration ($p > .05$). The greatest difference occurred in attitudes toward Play followed by Teaching-Learning. Parents of the non-handicapped were significantly more positive about the importance of play in child development and their own ability to guide early learning. They also indicated a greater willingness to encourage creative behaviour and less need for control than did parents of handicapped children.

TABLE 2 in here

A step-wise discriminant analysis was applied to each subset to identify items which statistically discriminated between the parent groups. Because discriminant analysis forces differences to emerge, the items with a significant F (prior to the step-wise procedure) were examined to determine the size of the difference between mean scores for the two groups. When the differences on an item were equal to or greater than .25 that item was interpreted to reflect a discrepancy between attitudes. Applying this criteria, thirteen items out of a possible fifty were identified as those on which parents in this study expressed the greatest attitude differences. The magnitude of the difference between groups on an item was the criterion rather than the direction of response since discrepant items appeared throughout the range of responses (see Table 3).

TABLE 3 in here

PROFILE OF CHILD-REARING EXPECTATIONS

Creativity. Table 4 presents a comparative profile of mean responses for each item in the Creativity subset. The profile reveals that both parent groups expressed a greater number of desirable responses than undesirable ones. More specifically, they mutually encourage children to ask them questions, to make up stories, to play with toys made for the opposite sex, to engage in pretending, to experiment with problem solving, and to play for extended periods of time. These attitudes represent family strengths.

There was agreement in rejecting the P.A.A.T. statement "When my child plays with toys the pretending seems foolish" (item 21). However, a discrepancy was indicated on this item. Whereas parents of non-handicapped children strongly supported the value of pretending, parents of the handicapped reported they accepted fantasy but often had difficulty understanding their child's preference for repetition, especially the need to recreate play situations over and over again (Strom, 1981).

Parents of the handicapped felt it unacceptable when their child spent a lot of time playing alone while parents of the non-handicapped were somewhat more accepting of the need for solitary play (item 36). This item was another discriminating Creativity variable. Many parents, particularly those with an older handicapped child, could benefit from understanding the merits of respecting privacy. Time spent in solitary play or reflection is not exclusively the realm of the intelligent. Indeed even the parents of normal children expressed opinions narrowly within the desirable range. To be alone is not necessarily to be lonely, yet the differences between these two concepts does not appear to be well recognized by either group of parents. Research has shown that non-handicapped children fantasize more in solitary play than during play with peers or parents. This circumstance suggests the need for parents to re-examine their ideas about solitary play which does in fact facilitate the problem solving through its direct influence on the development of concentration, task persistence, self-control and delay of closure.

Two additional items on the Creativity subset deserve mention even though neither was implicated by discriminant analysis. According to the profile both parents were reluctant to express uncertainty in answering children's questions (item 26). The childhood need for a sense of order and security is not at issue here. Rather, any parents whose children will someday live independently ought to help prepare them for the ambiguity inherent in adult life. Most boys and girls are capable of early lessons emphasizing the ongoing nature of problems and the benefits to creativity that occur with delay of closure.

The final item on which parents were at variance with the desired standard dealt with being willing to encourage children to engage in self evaluation (item 46). The assumption that self esteem can be developed by parental praise of virtually every child idea, performance or production is lacking in evidence. On the contrary, this approach more often creates such a dependency on the judgement of others that the process of self evaluation is rarely practiced.

TABLE 4 in here

Frustration. One might suppose that raising a handicapped child involves more frustration than bringing up a normal child. But on the profile in Table 5 parents reported similar attitudes about frustration regardless of the intellectual capabilities of their child. This unexpected finding is confirmed by a lack of significant differences in the one-way analysis of variance. Perhaps the P.A.A.T. does not tap the differential aspects of frustration involved in parenting a handicapped child. But what is certain is that both groups of parents expressed desirable attitudes on most of the subset items. The strengths they shared include a willingness to: permit noise during play; observe play when requested; allow the expression of fears and anxieties; respond to questions even when busy; tolerate the child getting dirty at play; facilitate the interactive conditions of spontaneous play; let the child play with as many toys as she/he wishes; and pay attention to show-off behaviour.

The only Frustration item which discriminated between the groups was "I get tired of all the fears that my child talks about" (item 12). Table 5 shows that parents of non-handicapped gave a more favourable response. Since the intellectually handicapped are sometimes nonverbal their parents' response to this item may indicate a desire for the child to communicate on any topic. The nonverbal child often reacts to fear and anxiety in a way that upsets parents because the interpretation of unspoken clues is often time consuming and erroneous. The acceptance of children's anxieties, however they are expressed, can improve the family relationship and help the young learn to cope with life's predictable doubts (Goldman, 1964; 1982).

Both parent groups registered undesirable attitudes regarding adult intervention when fighting occurs during play (item 22). For mothers and fathers whose child is handicapped, the reluctance to accept conflict is understandable when their motive is to protect the child. However, they may not always appreciate the difference between control and protection. Certainly parents of the non-handicapped should recognize the inevitability of conflict during play. This assumption should also apply for the handicapped. At a time when we are asked to accept more human diversity, it seems prudent for all adults to support conflict management as an important goal in child development. Parental tolerance of disputes between playmates, along with an acceptance of their own role as models of conflict resolution, is in the best interest of the handicapped and non-handicapped children.

The lowest mean score for both parent groups was recorded for the statement "I want my child to put the toys away before going to bed" (item 47). Children who express disappointment with this procedure are usually reminded that they are learning to be responsible, to achieve a sense of order. What the parents seem to have overlooked is that their intended lesson may be less valuable than what could be gained if the play things were sometimes allowed to remain in place overnight. For example, the persistence needed to solve complex problems is unlikely to develop unless a task begun today can be continued tomorrow without starting all over again. Instead of developing the habit of reaching premature conclusions, a child can learn to feel comfortable with incompleteness and ambiguity if his or her occupied play space is respected as being "work in progress".

TABLE 5 in here

Control. Table 6 profiles the mean responses for each item on the Control subset. A clustering of scores around the mid-point (2.50) differentiating favourable responses from those considered unfavourable indicates that most parents lacked strong feelings about issues of control. Nevertheless both groups demonstrated these favourable attitudes: a willingness to allow disagreement; permitting the child to speak about any topic; letting the young talk more than oneself; respect for the childhood strength of imagination; and encouragement of personal decision making.

Parents of the non-handicapped more often gave a Strong NO response for the statement "When at play with my child I prefer games with rules rather than make-believe kinds of play" (item 28). The rationale for Strong NO is that fantasy play permits children to exhibit their strength of imagination. It follows that during interactive pretending with parents children experience a sense of power that cannot be matched in games with rules which emphasize adult strengths. Parents of the handicapped could benefit from a greater appreciation of how fantasy contributes to child development. They should also learn to utilize play as a medium for teaching skills and values.

The statement "I provide chances for my child to make up his or her mind about a lot of things" was a differentiating variable in the discriminant analysis (item 38). Parents of the non-handicapped expressed more favourable expectations for their child's development of self determination. Independence depends so much on early preparation. For the intellectually handicapped, autonomy in adolescence is directly related to developing language and communication skills. Accordingly, parents need to recognize how controlling attitudes can be manifested by over-protective behaviours which are clearly detrimental to growth.

Discrepant attitudes also were recorded for the statement "There are just some things I don't want my child to talk about" (item 13). Parents of non-handicapped youngsters felt more strongly that a child's freedom to comment on any topic allows mothers and fathers the opportunity to share their own value system with sons and daughters. In contrast, parents of the handicapped were unsure about this aspect of childrearing. For both groups of parents more is at stake than just the protection of children. Instead it appears that the child who is continually dominated, no matter how kindly, will cease in some measure to grow because power needs remain unexpressed and unsatisfied. Identity requires self-assertion as a way of making ourselves known, expressing how we see things and what we stand for. Only through this kind of self-disclosure can intimate and lasting relationships be developed.

Again, as indicated on the Frustration subset, the control of conflict proved to be an area in which parents were ambivalent. Most of them did not offer the desirable response of Strong NO to the statement "I feel play must be stopped when my child becomes angry at a playmate" (item 33). As expected the non-handicapped sample reported a somewhat more favourable score. However, the lack of strong response by either group suggests they need to acquire more effective techniques of conflict resolution. The parent education focus should go beyond play situations and expose children to a wide range of possible conflicts with parents serving as positive role models.

The parents expressed similar but undesirable expectations for controlling their child's involvement in conversation, "I like my child to be quiet when adults are talking"(item 18). Neither group seemed to be clear about the proper balance between traditional etiquette and the independence needs of children. On a related item both groups lacked a strong response to this statement "When we play I want my child to be the person in control" (item 23). Mean scores below the mid-point on the continuum confirm that parents need training to acquire the skills of sharing dominance which are essential for adult-child play.

TABLE 6 in here

Play. Examination of the Table 7 profile shows that play was viewed as a highly desirable activity. There was mutual agreement that: children need to play with parents as well as peers; family play can improve a child's behaviour and language; and youngsters will respect parents who play with them. In terms of their readiness to become play partners, the parents expressed confidence in choosing toys, felt comfortable while at play, and were able to sustain interest in pretending. Together these attitudes enhance child achievement and family relationships because they honour the interest and creativity of the young.

The lowest mean score was recorded for the statement "I try to praise my child a lot when we play" (item 34). Responses to this item contributed to the discrimination between groups and revealed that adults need guidance in relearning the imaginative play skills their children so naturally exhibit. Any observer of play among children will note that it provides them with intrinsic satisfaction so they seldom praise one another. By contrast, the praising adult seems oblivious to the intrinsic satisfaction of play and insists on being a judge whose function is to verbally reinforce selected child behaviours. If parents found sufficient pleasure in play, as children do, they would have no difficulty sustaining attention. Play dissatisfaction usually shows up in terms of a short attention span and the frequent use of praise, an extraneous reward system.

During our interviews parents of the handicapped asked how to enlarge their child's play agenda and how to arrange for play with the non-handicapped. In this connection "My child learns by playing with other children" received the highest mean score from both parent groups and discriminated between them (item 49). Studies have shown that when handicapped and non-handicapped youngsters are integrated in a structured play setting, benefits result for both parties. The quality of play by the handicapped is improved by the influence of a more experienced peer model. The amount of time the handicapped child is able to remain interested in play also increases as a result of the interaction (Devoney, Guralnick, and Rubin, 1981). For the non-handicapped child early exposure to the wide range of human diversity may influence the formation of positive attitudes toward the handicapped (Pjeterse, 1980; Johnson and Johnson, 1983). Parents acknowledge the value of peer play but are they willing to extend their appreciation of this vital activity to include the merits of play between the handicapped and non-handicapped ? This seems to be an important issue for emphasis in parent programs.

Favourable, yet highly discrepant views were expressed concerning the adult use of childlike language during interactive play (item 44). One reason for the variance can be attributed to the verbal deficit of intellectually handicapped children. Many of their language training programs assign parents the role of imitators. The idea is to reinforce child utterances as opposed to being a language model which is the usual parent obligation toward non-handicapped children. Perhaps this particular P.A.A.T. item is inappropriate for handicapped children who are also language delayed.

TABLE 7 in here

Teaching-Learning. Both groups held desirable attitudes about the conditions which promote learning. The profile in Table 8 shows there was agreement that children gain more from observation than by being told; learning failures ought not be punished; and parents can tell when a child has learned something. Nevertheless, the mothers and fathers in this study expressed a lack of confidence in their own ability to provide a stimulating learning environment at home (item 30). This admission becomes even more disappointing when it is linked with parents' recognition that much of what a child learns occurs before formal schooling begins (item 5).

Educators must share part of the blame for perpetuating the myth that an expert background is required for teaching (Becker and Engelmann, 1981). It is time to acknowledge that the most desirable pupil-teacher ratio exists within the family. Moreover, research on early learning has confirmed parents to be the most important teachers of their pre-school children. Yet, because mothers and fathers see themselves as having inadequate teacher training, they are apprehensive about doing a poor job. The reluctance is greatest in families with handicapped children. Lacking a knowledge of the behavioural norms for boys and girls in their child's circumstance, these parents live with uncertainty about the goals and expectations they should adopt (Rees, 1981; Strom and Bernard, 1982).

Discriminant analysis identified group attitude differences about the ways in which adult language models influence children's speech development (item 25).

The level of satisfaction derived from play conversations also differentiated the parent samples (item 20). Responses on these two items reflect the differing language training methods advocated for the nonverbal and language delayed child versus the child whose verbal skills develop normally. The proximity of mean scores confirm that desirable yet divergent attitudes exist regarding the specific function of parents as language facilitators.

The other statements on which parents expressed distant but favourable responses were "It's hard for me to tell when my child has learned something"(item 10), and "If we play whenever my child wants to, not much learning will take place" (item 50). The desirable response of Strong NO for those statements was met more often by parents of non-handicapped children. Still the implied correspondence between the two items provides a crucial message to parents of the handicapped. Their play relationship can be the greatest source of mutual satisfaction. Then too, the lesser cognitive maturity of the handicapped means that play remains a viable way to teach them even as they grow older. Therefore, parents are well advised to seek pleasure from the continuing development of a close and loving relationship rather than make their satisfaction contingent upon a child's cognitive achievement (Rees, 1982).

CONCLUSIONS

Parents of the handicapped set expectations for their children and themselves that vary somewhat from normal families. In this study they expressed greater uncertainty about the obligation to encourage creativity; more of a desire to control child behaviour; less support for play as an important activity; and less self confidence in their ability to facilitate the Teaching-Learning process. Surprisingly, they did not report higher levels of frustration in the parenting role than did those with a non-handicapped child. When specific differences between groups were identified, the mothers and fathers of normal children were found to have more favourable attitudes. The thirteen P.A.A.T. items reflecting the most discrepant views present educators with a guide for differentiating parent curriculum.

Despite differences in attitudes, the parents of handicapped and non-handicapped children shared numerous family strengths. These strengths should be taken into account by educational planners. The influence of both parent groups will improve as their members become more able to encourage creativity and persistence, develop worthwhile play activities and sustain involvement in Teaching-Learning situations. The P.A.A.T. has identified some of the variables which require attention to ensure parent development. In the final analysis helping individual mothers and fathers prepare themselves for teaching is the goal of assessment, feedback and parent curriculum.

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TABLE 1

SOCIOECONOMIC LEVELS* OF PARENTS OF

HANDICAPPED AND NON-HANDICAPPED CHILDREN

Sample	Total Number	SES Low		SES Middle		SES High	
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Handicapped	101	21	(20.8)	44	(43.6)	36	(35.6)
Non-Handicapped	344	101	(29.4)	221	(64.2)	22	(6.4)

* Australian Bureau of Statistics, 1982.

TABLE 2

PARENTS PAAT TOTAL AND SUBSET SCORES

	Group Means			
Subset	Parents of Handicapped Children	Parents of Non-Handicapped Children	$\bar{X}$ Difference	p = less than
Creativity	26.4	27.5	1.1	.0007*
Frustration	27.7	28.2	.5	.1031
Control	26.3	27.7	1.4	.0000*
Play	29.1	31.3	2.2	.0000*
Teaching-Learning	29.6	31.5	1.9	.0000*
TOTAL	139.1	146.3		.0000*

*Significant at .001 level

TABLE 3

PAAT SUBSET ITEMS WHICH DISCRIMINATE BETWEEN THE TWO GROUPS OF PARENTS

Subset Variable	PAAT Item	Difference Between Means	F to Enter
Creativity			
21	When my child plays with toys, the pretending seems foolish.	.42	38.65
36	It is all right for my child to spend a lot of time playing alone.	.35	18.79
Frustration			
12	I get tired of all the fears my child talks about.	.52	52.13
Control			
13	There are some thing I just don't want my child to talk about.	.37	15.38
28	When at play with my child, I prefer games that have rules rather than the make-believe kind of play.	.44	27.99
38	I provide chances for my child to make up his own mind about a lot of things.	.32	22.21
Play			
34	I try to praise my child a lot when we play.	.26	11.34
44	I imitate my child's speech when we play so that the child understands.	.69	80.93
49	My child learns by playing with other children.	.28	20.69
Teaching-Learning			
10	It is hard for me to tell when my child has learned something.	.43	28.61
20	It is difficult for me to think of things to say to my child during play.	.35	23.00
25	When I play with my child I feel the need to talk like a child.	.37	24.48
50	If we play whenever my child wants to, not much learning will take place.	.41	22.78

TABLE 4

PROFILE OF CHILDREARING EXPECTATIONS FOR CREATIVITY

Item Number	Item Description	Parents of Intellectually Handicapped (H) Children's Group Mean	Parents of Non-Handicapped (NH) Children's Group Mean	Undesirable Scores — Desirable Scores 1.0''''''''1.75''''''''2.5''''''''3.25''''''''4.0
1	Child's questions encouraged	3.16	3.15	H/NH
6	Likes child to make up stories	3.10	3.17	H NH
11	Encourages guessing	2.48	2.56	H NH
16	Toy selection not sexually biased	2.65	2.62	H/NH
*21	Child's pretending seems natural	3.19	3.61	H NH
26	Willing to express uncertainty in answering child's questions	1.83	1.71	NH H
31	Lets child experiment with problem solving	2.95	3.11	H NH
*36	Child's playing alone acceptable	2.33	2.68	H NH
41	Accepts child need for long play periods	2.81	2.99	H,NH
46	Lets child judge own work (refrains from judging)	1.93	1.85	NH/H

*Items which significantly discriminate between the groups.

H = Handicapped

NH = Non-Handicapped

TABLE 5

PROFILE OF CHILDREARING EXPECTATIONS FOR FRUSTRATION

Item umber	Item Description	Parents of Intellectually Handicapped (H) Children's Group Mean	Parents of Non-Handi-capped (NH) Children's Group Mean	Undesirable Scores 1.0''''''''1.75''''''''2.5''''''''3.25''''''''4.0 Desirable Scores
2	Noise permitted during child's play	3.32	3.31	NH/H
7	Responds favorably to child's call to observe play	2.82	2.90	H/NH
*12	Child allowed free expression of fears and anxieties	2.94	3.46	H NH
17	Child's questions accepted even when parent is busy	2.57	2.52	NH/H
22	Fighting at play handled without punishment	2.45	2.48	H/NH
27	Child may get dirty at play	3.34	3.46	H/NH
32	Child may interrupt play partner	3.09	3.16	H/NH
37	Child can play with as many toys as he or she wishes	2.83	2.79	NH/H
42	Pays attention to child's showing off	2.48	2.50	H/NH
47	Respects child's play as work in process	1.83	1.61	NH H

*Item which significantly discriminates between the groups

H = Handicapped NH = Non-Handicapped

TABLE 6

PROFILE OF CHILDREARING EXPECTATIONS FOR CONTROL

Item umber	Item Description	Parents of Intellectually Handicapped (H) Children's Group Mean	Parents of Non-Handicapped (NH) Children's Group Mean	Undesirable Scores 1.0''''''''1.75''''''''2.5''''''''3.25''''''''4.0 Desirable Scores
3	Child allowed to disagree with parent	2.91	3.05	H/NH
8	Wants child to talk more than self	2.84	2.64	NH/H
*13	Child permitted to talk about any topic	2.84	3.21	H NH
18	Child may talk when adults are talking	2.08	1.92	NH/H
23	Wants to share play dominance with child	2.50	2.43	NH/H
*28	Wants to honor child strength	2.79	3.23	H NH
33	Positive management of conflict (not stopping play)	2.36	2.58	H NH
*38	Child has chances to make decisions	2.88	3.20	H NH
43	Comfortable in not knowing all the answers to child's questions	2.40	2.63	H NH
48	Child permitted to have secrets from parents	2.69	2.82	H NH

*Items which significantly discriminate between groups

H = Handicapped NH = Non-Handicapped

TABLE 7

PROFILE OF CHILDREARING EXPECTATIONS FOR PLAY

Item Number	Item Description	Parents of Intellectually Handicapped (H) Children's Group Mean	Parents of Non-Handicapped (NH) Children's Group Mean	Undesirable Scores 1.0''''''''1.75''''''''2.5	2.5''''''''3.25''''''''4.0 Desirable Scores
4	Believes child needs to play with parent	3.26	3.31		H/NH
9	Comfortable in playing with child	3.04	3.25		H NH
14	Believes child will respect parent who plays with him or her	3.19	3.46		H NH
19	Able to choose new toys	3.09	3.21		H NH
24	Believes playing with child improves child behavior	2.94	3.05		H/NH
29	Child learns new words when playing	2.95	3.13		H NH
*34	Recognizes that the play process is rewarding	1.68	1.94	H NH	
39	Can stay interested in playing with child	2.81	2.89		H/NH
*44	Does not use child-like language	2.80	3.49		H NH
*49	Believes children learn by playing with other children	3.32	3.60		H NH

*Items which significantly discriminate between groups

H = Handicapped

NH = Non-Handicapped

TABLE 8

PROFILE OF CHILDREARING EXPECTATIONS FOR TEACHING-LEARNING

Item umber	Item Description	Parents of Intellectually Handicapped (H) Children's Group Mean	Parents of Non-Handicapped (NH) Children's Group Mean	Undesirable Scores 1.0''''''''1.75''''''''2.5 ''''''3.25''''''''4.0 Desirable Scores
5	Believes much learning occurs before school	3.07	3.17	H/NH
*10	Can tell when child has learned	2.81	3.24	H NH
15	Accepts child's make-believe companions	3.16	3.14	NH/H
*20	Able to respond to child during play	3.06	3.41	H NH
*25	Does not talk down to child but uses typical language	3.07	3.44	H NH
30	Feels capable of providing a learning environment at home	2.30	2.32	H/NH
35	Believes child learning occurs more by observation than by being told	3.18	3.29	H NH
40	Child's learning failures not punished (scolding)	3.26	3.38	H NH
45	Easily uses toys in teaching child	2.98	2.95	NH/H
*50	Believes playing with child increases child's learning	2.75	3.16	H NH

*Items which significantly discriminate between groups

H = Handicapped NH = Non-Handicapped

The impact of changing patterns of family living including unemployment on identity formation in late adolescence

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INTRODUCTION

The period of late adolescence, that is, the age range 18-21 years, has been viewed in our society as a crucial time in the life-span in which to formulate answers to the questions 'Who am I?' and 'Where am I going?'. The ideas of Erikson (1959: 1971) and the developmental theorists (e.g. Newman and Newman, 1979) concerning an identity crisis during this period and its effects for the individual in later stages of the life-cycle are still taught in behavioural science courses and have gained general acceptance in wider society. In fact they shape the expectations of parents, teachers and adults in the helping professions concerning adolescent behaviour and have been absorbed by many of our adolescents as relatively realistic goals for their personal development. For example, the developmental tasks associated with the identity crisis of late adolescence have been specified as : autonomy from parents, sex-role identity, career choice and definition and internalised morality (Newman and Newman, 1979: 322). Failure to achieve these tasks is claimed to result in a confused sense of identity (i.e. 'identity diffusion') with concomitant anxiety, apathy, hostility and inability to make decisions and to block the way to progression to adulthood.

However, in a changing society such as Australia in the 1980's the integration of identity in late adolescence is difficult to achieve. The questions which this paper addresses are :

1. To what extent are the above developmental tasks predicated upon assumptions which are specific to the historical conditions of the period in which these ideas arose, for example, the economic conditions of full employment and the predominance of nuclear family units in which the husband was the provider and the wife the domestic carer?

2. To what extent are they influenced by assumptions about the family and society which focus on consensus and ignore differences in class and gender?

3. To what extent are they influenced by employment/ unemployment for today's youth?

THE IDENTITY CRISIS OF LATE ADOLESCENCE

Identity according to Erikson is a process located both within the core of the individual and in the core of his/ her communal culture which gives meaning and continuity to individual existence so that the person can say, 'This is the real me' (1971: 19-22). In no other stage of the life-cycle are the promise of finding oneself and the threat of losing oneself so closely allied as they are in adolescence, claims Erikson (1971: 243). He sees the adolescent identity crisis as one in which young people become whole people in their own right during a developmental stage characterised by a diversity of changes in physical growth, genital maturation and social awareness. Crisis here means a normal set of stresses and strains, 'a necessary turning point, a crucial moment, when development must move one way or another, marshalling resources of growth, recovery and a further differentiation'. (Erikson, 1971: 16).

Satisfactory resolution of the identity crisis results in identity achievement, unsatisfactory resolution in identity diffusion. The period of crisis is described as a moratorium when different identities are being tried out. A state of foreclosure is said to exist if the individual adopts the identity prescribed by parents and other adults without a period of questioning, trial and error. (Erikson, 1971: 236-246).

When these identity statuses of Erikson's have been operationalised and tested with adolescents, the results suggest that identity achievement as defined by Erikson is closely associated with adults' expectations for white middle-class males only. (Marcia, 1966; Cross and Allen, 1970; Orlofsky et al, 1973; Podd, 1972; Marcia and

Lesser, 1973). Traditional female characteristics such as warmth and understanding were not associated with crisis resolution and identity achievement (Orlofsky, 1978) and females were more likely to be expected to be dependent and to adhere to parental and authority patterns (the *foreclosure* status) than to achieve an independent identity. (Marcia and Friedman, 1970; Toder and Marcia, 1973; Schenkel, 1975; Waterman and Nevid, 1977). Research which has applied Erikson's identity statuses to employed working class youth (Morash, 1980) indicates that for these youth the route to identity is more concrete and direct than for their middle-class counterparts. They do not have the luxury of an extended moratorium during the period of tertiary education.

These findings suggest that identity as defined by Erikson constitutes middle-class *male* achievement in our society. Other routes to identity achievement are categorised as inferior and a sign of immaturity and possible maladjustment. Yet sociological studies (see Dennis et al, 1956; Komarovsky, 1962; Littlejohn, 1963; Bryson and Thompson, 1972; Oxley, 1978; Williams, 1981) have shown that for working class males and females of both classes adult identity is not necessarily constructed on a commitment to a career which involves academic success, individual competition, instrumental, aggressive characteristics and autonomy from parental and other significant authority figures. For them, the routes to adult identity take different paths which provide for subjectively satisfying resolutions of the identity crisis while at the same time excluding them from access to privileges and resources such as high status and highly paid career structures which are characteristic of middle-class male culture. Even within the period and culture in which the ideas of the developmental theorists arose the identity crisis of adolescence was not uniform across class and gender. Working class males, for example, placed strong emphasis on 'mateship', sexual prowess and sporting achievement and females on identity associated with motherhood.

Alternative routes to identity are seen in a different light when a theoretical perspective is adopted which takes into account historical, cultural and class determinants of individual identity. British sociologists examining youth subcultures in post-war Britain highlight youth as a means by which a rapidly changing society can experiment with new social forms which ultimately lend flexibility to the system. Youth subcultures such as the 'Teddy Boys', 'Mods', 'Rockers', 'Skinheads', 'Punk Rockers' are seen as providing an extended moratorium period for working class males. (Brake, 1980: 27). These subcultures also provide a 'moratorium' for wider society to test out new life-styles, music, leisure, clothes and the potential market for new commodities. (Clarke et al, 1975: 66).

Researchers such as Clarke (1975) and Brake (1980) who have adopted a framework which takes wider societal factors into consideration suggest that differences in routes to identity are linked to differential access to resources, life chances and power. Those with easiest access to male power and, through their families, to middle-class resources will most closely resemble the predominant prescription for adolescent identity, that is, identity achievement as described by Erikson and the developmental tasks posited by the developmental theorists. Those with little access to such resources will find alternative routes to identity which are defined as inferior and help to keep them in a powerless position in society.

These theorists hypothesise that there are at least four categories of youth who may take different routes to autonomy and identity over shorter or longer periods, that is, middle-class males; middle-class females; working-class females; working-class males.

Within this wider framework, when the question is asked 'Whose interests are being served by the predominant prescriptions for the period of adolescence?', it is not at all clear that young people themselves are the main beneficiaries. Powerful adults at home, in the educational system and in the workforce, may in fact be imposing on adolescents their ideas about adolescent identity and the permissible expression of this 'crisis'. (See Flasher on 'Adultism', 1978). The acceptability and desirability of middle-class male identity achievement is one way of ensuring that middle-class male culture is the desirable norm. It is in the interests of this strata of society to have such a definition of the situation propagated and for those individuals who fail to achieve such identity to be perceived and to perceive themselves as inferior and failing in some way, thus justifying their exclusion from certain privileges in society.

Lukes (1974: 23-24) sees the most far-reaching and insidious use of power in our society as the ability to control the very wants and desires of subordinate groups, so averting conflict and ensuring that the powerful have their interests met. The identity crisis of late adolescence in advanced, industrial, western capitalist society may be seen as such a mechanism of social control. (See Van Krieken, 1980: 85). Erikson is clear that the *end* of adolescence and the transition to acceptable adulthood depends on a successful resolution of the crisis when childish unrest is put away and the serious business of rearing the next generation is undertaken. Thus adolescent unrest can be recognised but institutionalised and controlled, not necessarily in the interests of individual adolescents.

That the perceived function of this period of a person's life can vary according to historical and cultural circumstances as well as class and gender positions, in the interests of powerful adults, is verified when one looks at other historical times and other cultures. For example, Aries (1963: 23, 27, 251) points out that until the 18th Century adolescence and childhood were one; people had no idea of what we call adolescence and the idea was a long time taking shape. Until schooling and conscription separated youth from childhood and adulthood this 'in between' period did not exist. Similarly, in other cultures such as the traditional Chinese culture where there was no reason for a transitional period, there was no word for adolescence and no adolescent crisis. (Hsu,1955).

The discrepancy which exists between adults' expectations for adolescent identity formation and the experiences of adolescents themselves may well be explained by the facts that ideas suited to American males from middle-class families in the 1950's are no longer applicable in the 1980's and that class and gender determinants of identity make one model inappropriate for all adolescents. This discrepancy may be confounded by methodologies which emphasise objective measures of identity, that is, measures separate from the experiences and reports of adolescents themselves. This is no doubt one of the reasons for the emphasis in the literature on self-report and experiential data. On the Australian scene, the following excerpt from the conclusions of one of the most thorough studies of our own adolescents during the 1960's reflects the American paradigm of middle-class male achievement.

> The teenager proceeds on his way, from 12 to 20, for the most part tranquilly, and without undue upset; he grows up slowly and smoothly with occasional flurries of very human exasperation and temper; he goes about his work steadily with now and then a lapse into unrealiability; and he takes his pleasures moderately, sometimes losing himself in excitement of the exhilaration of achievement. And thus, constantly, calmly, and soberly, he builds up, almost impercetibly, his ideas of his own worth, feels out his place in the world, tests out his relationship with his family, teachers, employers, and other teenagers and quietly adopts a life of behaviour and the character that fits in best wish the world as he sees it. (My emphasis).
>
> (Connell et al, 1975: 295-6).

How appropriate is this model in the turbulent 80's?

THE EFFECTS OF CHANGES WITHIN AND WITHOUT THE NUCLEAR FAMILY ON ADOLESCENT IDENTITY FORMATION.

Within the paradigm suggested by Erikson, the family acts as a mediating link between the individual and the society in which that individual operates. Family class position; family structure and changes in the nuclear family are reflected in the individual's approach to the adolescent identity crisis and the accomplishment or otherwise of the associated developmental tasks.

The assumption has been made that the stable family unit of one adult male who is the breadwinner and one adult female who is the nurturer/carer incorporates the elements which are needed to socialise boys and girls for their adult roles and their identity in our society. (See Parsons and Bales, 1955: 19-21). The fully mature adult male is expected to have an occupation and to exhibit characteristics associated with his instrumental leadership position and the fully mature adult female to be a mother and to exhibit characteristics associated with her expressive carer, helpmate function. (Parsons and Bales, 1956: 21).

Our contention, however, is that changes in the family in which children are reared (family of orientation) and the family which they as adults will establish (family of procreation) mean that the nuclear family as such is no longer in a position to contribute in a specific and rigidly defined way to adolescent identity formation. In addition changes in the wider society mean that the developmental tasks of late adolescence associated with this crisis are impossible to achieve for an increasing number of adolescents today. Some of these changes are :

1. High Level of Unemployment

Due to the high level of unemployment[4] there is little hope of the formation of an occupational identity for many adolescents today. Feelings of self-worth for these young people are likely to be extremely low in a society where the 'work ethic' is strongly emphasised. (Victorian Employment Committees, 1980: 50). If they do manage to find an alternative route to identity, the definition allocated to such an identity by dominant groups in society will be that it is deviant from the norm and inferior, thus keeping them in a powerless position vis-à-vis the employed person. In our study employment/unemployment is a factor to be considered when examining self-perceptions of youth identity.

2. Family Structure During Childhood

Across classes life in a one parent family may increasingly be a stage in the family situation of adolescence[1]. Although these children may have access to the other parent, the structure of the family has been altered by the residential absence of one or other parent. In these circumstances assumptions concerning a male provider who is the instrumental leader and a female help-mate who is the expressive carer no longer applies. There is some evidence that single parent, female headed family structure allows women some scope for transcending their submissive expressive/carer help-mate functions, thus presenting a different role model to children. (Wearing, 1984: 151-157). Recent research (Weiss, 1979: 110-111; Rowling, 1983: 96) also suggests that having lived in a one parent family hastens a sense of independence from parents and autonomy in decision making and contributes to a more diffuse gender -role identity. The present study looks at the effect of family structure on youth perceptions of identity.

3. Employment Patterns of the Parents

The increase in the number of married women in the work force[2] and the smaller families established since the 1950's[3] means that women are not likely to be confined to child-rearing for the term of their natural lives. There is a change in expectations of the mothers' perceptions of their identity, especially with regard to more flexible gender -roles. In the present study we have examined the relationship between a subjective sense of maturity on the part of adolescents and the number of years mother was in the work force. In addition, the relationship between the times of unemployment relative to the life-cycle, e.g. whether before or after child birth, etc., and these perceptions have been explored.

4. Family Mobility

The development of advanced, industrial, technological society means that the milieu in which youth seek for an identity which is their own is likely to alter, even where the family unit is stable and employment is possible. Many working class families move to follow work and many middle-class families move around so that the husband can move up in his career. Between 1976 and 1981, 48% of the adult Australian population had moved their place of residence.(5) A static sense of identity is unlikely under such circumstances. There is an advantage, of course, in the greater range of role models encountered, but in Erikson's terms this could lead to role confusion for adolescents. (See Kroger, 1980). Data has therefore been gathered on the relationship between mobility during childhood/adolescence and perceptions of identity.

5. Present Family Structure - Current Place of Residence

The high cost of accommodation(6) keeps many unemployed youth and those undergoing tertiary education in the parental home beyond the numerical years of adolescence. Complete autonomy, or even a high degree of autonomy from parents is impossible under these circumstances. The present study examines the effects of present family structure (that is, whether the adolescent lives at home with parents, with other family members or independently) on youth perceptions of identity.

6. Changing Values

The developmental task of internalised morality, or to use Erikson's phrase (1971: 27) the internalisation of 'the ideological structure of the environment' becomes increasingly difficult in a changing society. This developmental task or facet of the identity crisis assumes consensus throughout society on moral and ideological issues. But young people today are faced with conflicting views on such issues as religious commitment, sexual morality, homosexuality, pornography, abortion, use of drugs, divorce, environmental issues and definitions of gender, so that the task of adopting a framework of basic morality in late adolescence which will remain unchanged throughout adult life appears daunting, to say the least. Data has been collected in our study on adolescents' views on key issues such as the above.

Reviewers of the literature on research into identity status (e.g. Bourne, 1978; Bernard, 1981) come to the conclusion that some flexibility of identity is at least as important as a certain stability in today's changing society. The changes in Australian society outlined here would similarly suggest the need for flexibility.

Our study will eventually look at the effects of the factors outlined above as well as those of class and gender on adolescents' employment status and self-perceptions of identity. This paper presents preliminary findings on the first stage of the study, i.e. the factors as they affect working class youth.

METHOD

Sixty interviews were conducted wih employed and unemployed working class youth aged between 18 and 21 years using a questionnaire consisting of 74 items including open and closed questions. There were 30 women and 30 men divided equally into employed and unemployed for each sex. The unemployed had been without a job for six months or more. Either mother or father, and the respondent (where employed) had an occupation which could be classified as routine clerical-sales, semi- or unskilled manual.

The questionnaire covered background information, including educational level, current occupation and earnings, current living arrangements, mobility of the family, mother's and father's occupation and employment history, structure of family of origin, social networks, and a 30 item social attitudes and self-perception questionnaire. The latter included questions on dependence on parents, attitudes to employment, and moral, religious and political issues as well as sex role and gender identification and maturity.

RESULTS

1. High level of unemployment

The association between own employment/unemployment with self perceptions of maturity* was almost significant ($x^2 = 7.22$, df 3, .065) and is therefore worthy of comment. An inspection of the frequencies (Table 1) revealed that the effect lies in the results for males, with females showing no effect of either employment of unemployment on perceived maturity. However, employment for males is associated with immaturity and unemployment with maturity, and overall males see themselves as less mature than females.

Table I Here

These trends run counter to the conceptualisation of occupation leading to mature adult identity, at least for this working class sample. It appears that occupation is irrelevant for women's identity and may be counteractive for males. For subsequent analyses of the background variables it was therefore decided to use both perceived maturity and employment as dependent variables.

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* Perceived maturity as an adult male or female is used throughout the paper as the identity measure. It was obtained by dichotomising a 5-pt scale item into high and low scores.

2. Family structure during childhood

Numbers were relatively small for non-traditional patterns of childrearing, two-thirds of our respondents being raised in a two parent household for most of their childhood. Of the remaining third, one half were reared by mother alone, the other half including several other patterns e.g. raising by grandparents and non family members. No relationship was found between those raised in a traditional 2 parent family or otherwise for either current employment status or perceived maturity.

Testing remains to be done on possible relationships between family structure and gender role perceptions. However, further pursuit of the effects of single parenting as referred to in the introduction, would require boosting of numbers interviewed in this category and is therefore beyond the scope of the current analysis.

3. Employment patterns of parents

There were a surprisingly high number of cases (39 out of 60) where it was reported that the mother had never been unemployed, although she may have been working only part time. This compares with 41 out of 60 cases where there was definite indication that father had never been unemployed, but 6 of our respondents could not give information on this item. However, there was no association between perceived maturity or employment status of our respondents of either sex, and either mother's or father's times of unemployment. Twenty eight of the mothers (i.e. almost 50%) had worked full time for 11+ years. Again there was no association between perceived maturity or youth employment for either sex, and the number of years of employment of the mother.

4. Family mobility

Twenty six of the 60 respondents had moved residence more than three times by the age of 18 years, and 9 of these had moved more than 9 times by this age. An association was found between current employment status and mobility (x^2 = 8.32; df 3; .05) with males whose family had moved often (3+ times) more likely to be unemployed than those who had not. However, there were no differences in employment status of women who had not moved often, but those who had moved often were more likely to be employed than to be unemployed. This appears to contradict the trends for males but the numbers of women in the highly mobile category were small (n = 9) so the picture is not clear.

Table 2 Here

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5. Present family structure - current place of residence

Fifty per cent of respondents still lived at home with their parents, 40% shared accommodation with friends, leaving only 10% of the total sample with a different kind of accommodation from these two. Leaving aside this last category, a strong association emerged between current residence and employment status which was similar for both sexes, with the employed still living at home and the unemployed predominantly sharing with friends ($x^2 = 9.83$, df = 3 .05). There was however, no association between perceived maturity and current residence.

Table 3 Here

This finding contradicts the argument that unemployment necessarily keeps youth living at home. It is not clear from our analysis whether the unemployed leave home, or whether living away from home, possibly enforced, leads to unemployment.

6. Changing values

A. Manova using sex and employment status as independent variables yielded sex differences in attitudes to abortion and homosexuality (Mult. F = 2.074, df 17,39; p .030) with women more accepting of both of these than men. The means on a five point scale are as follows-

$\bar{X}$		
M	F	
2.6	1.7	Every woman has the right to abortion.
2.6	1.9	Homosexuality is wrong and should be punished.

A problem in dealing with concepts of internalised morality is highlighted in these items, since it appears that "internalised morality" may be gender based, at least in part.

Significant effects were also yielded by the employment factor on the Manova analysis (Mult. F = 2.403; fr 17,39; P .012), with a stronger belief by the employed that one should consult with parents (x 2.9 and 3.9 respectively) and take an interest in politics (x = 2.3 and 3.2). The former attitude may be a function of the other association already noted between being employed, and living at home with parents.

A principle components factor analysis was run on the 30 item social issues and self perception questionnaire in order to obtain an overall picture of the way our working class sample responded. Factor 1, which accounted for almost 20% of the variance, included a high degree of autonomy from parents, low religious belief and practice, and low belief in the importance of a job for one's identity. It endorsed rights to abortion and to drugs if they affect only the individual, but disapproved of homosexuality. This factor summarises as a non-traditional orientation except for attitude to homosexuality which could be accounted for by a strong male working class emphasis on sexuality as a means to identity.

Conclusions

The association between employment status and two of the six background variables was not matched by association with our measure of identity. This may be because the measure is not adequate (and there are fuller measures of identity within the data gathered, yet to be explored) or it may be that Erikson's proposals of a relatively direct link between occupation and identity is not defensible for a working class sample. On the other hand, our data gives some support for the idea which seems to be gaining popularity, that there may be advantages for unemployed youth in living in groups of their own peers. The indications from our data are that at the very least some autonomy is associated with living independently from parents. This seems to be a good thing of itself for people in this age group and within the terms of Erikson's theory does at least accomplish one developmental task.

Thus, these preliminary findings from our working class sample call into question, at least some of the concepts of Erikson's identity theory and the implications vis-a-vis occupation contributing to autonomy and independence from parents and perceived maturity. This may prove to be associated with working class occupation when further study examining middle-class respondents is undertaken. If so it does suggest class bias in Erikson's ideas.

Our data suggests that occupation may not, in fact, be the primary route to identity for working class youth in current conditions of high unemployment in spite of the fact that such unemployment consigns them to an inferior status position and a high degree of powerlessness in our society.

TABLE 1

Frequency of employed and unemployed male and female adolescent by perceived maturity.

	Mature	Not Mature	Total
MALE EMPLOYED	5	10	15
MALE UNEMPLOYED	9	6	15
FEM EMPLOYED	10	5	15
FEM UNEMPLOYED	12	3	15
	36	24	60

TABLE 2

Frequency of employed and unemployed male and female adolescents by mobility during childhood.

	Male Emp	Male Unemp	Fem Emp	Fem Unemp	Total
No. of moves					
0 - 2	9	4	9	11	33
3 +	6	11	6	3	26
	15	15	15	14	59

TABLE 3

Frequency of employed and unemployed male and female adolescents by current place of residence.

	Male Emp	Male Unemp	Fem Emp	Fem Unemp	Total
Place of residence					
Family of origin	10	5	11	4	30
Share friends	5	9	2	8	24
	15	14	13	12	54

NOTES

1. It has been calculated that approximately 27% of children born in Australia in the 1970's will live in a one-parent household for some period prior to leaving school (English, 1981:5).

2. In 1966 30% of married women 25-35 years of age were in the workforce; in 1983 this had risen to 49% (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 1980:117; 1983).

3. In 1961 the total fertility rate for Australian women was 3.5, by 1976 this had dropped to 2.1 (Borrie et al, 1978: 37).

4. Unemployment for persons 15-19 years of age rose from 50,000 in 1974 to 106,900 in April 1982 and this figure does not include those who have returned to educational institutions or who have ceased to look for work due to discouragement (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 1980:137; 1982).

5. Of this 48%, 11%, have remained within the same Local Government Area, but the remaining 37% have moved into another Area (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 1981).

6. Modal rent in 1981 was 40-49 dollars per week, which is approximately equal to the dole and to tertiary educational assistance allowances (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 1981).

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The contribution of longitudinal studies to family research

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Introduction

In this paper I shall attempt to illustrate the particular contribution to our knowledge and understanding of the family of one style of research, namely the large-scale longitudinal study. In doing so I shall draw mainly on the work of the National Child Development Study (1958 Cohort), with which I have been closely involved for the past eleven years.

NCDS is one of the series of three studies in Great Britain, which have come to be known as the 'national birth cohorts'. Each has taken as its starting point a complete week's births in, respectively, 1946 (National Survey of Health and Development: eg. Douglas, 1964), 1958 (NCDS), and 1970 (Child Health and Education in the Seventies: eg. Chamberlain et al, 1975).

Of course, in concentrating on these national studies, I do not mean to deny the valuable contribution of more locally-based longitudinal research, of which there are several notable examples in Great Britain, including studies based in the Isle of Wight (Rutter et al 1970), Aberdeen (Illsley and Wilson, 1981) and Newcastle (Miller et al, 1960). For an account of 70 longitudinal projects in Europe, see Mednick and Baert (1981).

As I shall be presenting findings from the National Child Development Study, a brief account of its history, structure and methods is necessary. Before that, however, two more general points may be helpful.

Firstly, NCDS, in common with the other studies mentioned above, is child-based. My focus in this paper is exclusively on families with children.

Secondly, although I naturally believe there are many advantages to studies of this kind, it must be acknowledged that there are also some limitations. In particular, as we shall see, the data which they collect comprise mainly broad, epidemiological, relatively easily-measured variables. The large-scale studies are not appropriate for more sensitive, qualitative investigations of, for example, parent-child interactions. On the other hand it is in principle possible to supplement the regular collection of data on the whole cohort with more detailed studies of small sub-groups. This has been done on occasions, but perhaps less often than its potential value would merit.

National Child Development Study

NCDS has its origins in the Perinatal Mortality Study carried out by the National Birthday Trust Fund in 1958. Some 17,000 babies, all those born in Great Britain in the week 3-9 March of that year, were included in a study of medical and social factors associated with perinatal mortality and early handicapping conditions (eg. Butler and Bonham, 1963).

The longitudinal element was introduced when, in 1964, the success of the partial follow-up of the 1946 cohort of births, the interest of the Plowden Committee (set up by the Government to examine primary education in England and Wales), and the strenuous efforts of Professor Neville Butler and Dr Mia Pringle, led to financial support from the Department of Education and Science for a follow-up study to take place in 1965, when the study children were aged seven (Davie, Butler and Goldstein, 1972).

Subsequent full follow-ups have taken place at the ages of eleven (funded by the Social Science Research Council), sixteen (funded jointly by the Department of Education and Science and the Department of Health and Social Security) and twenty-three (funded by a consortium of five government departments: Health and Social Security; Education and Science; Employment; Environment; and the Manpower Services Commission).

The school-age follow-ups coincide with major transition points experienced by the majority of British school children. Up to the age of seven, within the maintained system, most children are educated in infants' schools or departments, and then transfer to either separate junior schools or junior departments within the same primary school.

The age of eleven marks the completion of primary education and transfer to secondary schools (in England and Wales. In Scotland this happens at twelve).

Compulsory education in Great Britain finishes at the age of sixteen. In fact the NCDS year-group was the first to be affected by the raising of the minimum school-leaving age from fifteen to sixteen.

The methods employed for each of the three school-age stages were essentially similar:

i) At each age, parents (usually the mother) were interviewed in the home by a health visitor.

ii) Every child was medically examined by a school medical officer.

iii) Schools completed questionnaires.

iv) Tests of ability and attainment were administered in the schools. These varied according to age, but each time included tests of reading and mathematics.

v) At eleven, the children themselves completed a short questionnaire, mainly concerned with leisure activities. At sixteen a much-expanded personal questionnaire was a major element in the follow-up.

At each of these follow-ups the target population was all children now in the country who were born in the relevant week. Thus children who had entered the country since birth were included, although they of course would not have a complete longitudinal record.

For the fourth follow-up at age twenty-three, information was obtained solely by means of a structured interview, average duration 80 minutes, carried out on our behalf by professional research interviewers. At this age no attempt was made to include new cases, the target population being all those not known to have died or emigrated who had taken part in any previous stage of the study.

There is not space here to give a detailed description of the information which was collected by these means. A fuller account of the study, as well as some of its recent findings, can be found in Fogelman (1983).

Given the above brief description, it is possible to identify four major characteristics of the study which together contribute to its particular flavour and strengths:

i) It is large. Not only does this mean that statistical relationships can be estimated with some precision, but also that the study provides large enough numbers in various sub-groups to allow sensible analysis.

ii) it is representative. The fact that the study is based on all the births in one week provides a complete cross-section of British society. Apart from some rather subtle possibilities concerning, for example, the mother's period of pregnancy and seasonal illnesses, for almost all purposes the cohort can be considered representative of children of that age group in Great Britain.

iii) the breadth of information collected makes it possible to examine the inter-relatedness of social, educational and health experience.

iv) Above all, it is longitudinal, so that the sequence of circumstances, and change over time, can be examined.

Response

Of course, claims about size and representativeness need to be substantiated in terms of the responding sample, not just the initial or target population. Inevitably there have been losses as the study progressed, through deaths and emigration, but also of those who cannot be found and of those who have chosen not to continue to take part.

Table 1 summarises the response rates at the major stages of the study.

Table 1 - Response Rates

Age	Target N	% with data	% refusals	% untraced or traced but no data obtained
Birth	17,733	98.2	1.8	
Seven	16,883	91.3	0.5	8.3
Eleven	16,835	90.0	4.9	4.1
Sixteen	16,915	87.3	6.7	5.4
Twenty-three	16,278	77.0	7.0	16.0

As can be seen, during the school years the response rate declined slightly, but remained at around 90%. Inevitably there have been greater losses at twenty-three, but the proportion interviewed is still satisfactorily high at 77%.

One often-overlooked characteristic of longitudinal studies is their ability to check the continuing representativeness of respondents, as earlier data are held on subsequent non-respondents. A considerable amount of such work has been carried out, so far up to the age of sixteen. Much of this is reported in Goldstein (1976), and shows no bias in relation to such measures as parents' education and occupation, or indices of physical development. Some small, but statistically significant, biases do appear in relation to certain minority groups of disadvantaged children. For example, at sixteen children who had previously received special education because of handicap and children born illegitimately are slightly under-represented. Further investigations have checked the representativeness of respondents with full data available to be included in longitudinal, multivariate analyses and others have explored the effects of repeating certain analysis omitting subsequent non-respondents. In no such case to date has any significant bias or change in result been found.

At the time of writing, similar analysis in relation to respondents at twenty-three is still continuing, so it is not yet possible to be reassuring about their characteristics. However, extensive bias checks were carried out in relation to a 5% sub-sample which a feasibility study at age twenty attempted to trace and interview, and no significant biases were found (Shepherd, 1980).

Findings

NCDS has to date led to the publication of nineteen books and some two hundred chapters and articles, very few of which could not be argued to be relevant to the study of the family. It is obviously necessary to be extremely selective, and I shall therefore concentrate on, firstly, those findings which are most directly concerned with the family structure and its association with the development of the child, and, secondly those findings which best demonstrate the potential of the longitudinal approach.

In doing so, I shall be drawing upon the original work of several of my colleagues, particularly that which can be found described more fully in Ferri (1976); Ferri and Robinson (1976); Lambert and Streather (1980); Essen and Lambert (1977); Essen (1978); Essen (1979); Lambert (1978); and Ferri (in press).

Changes in Family Situation

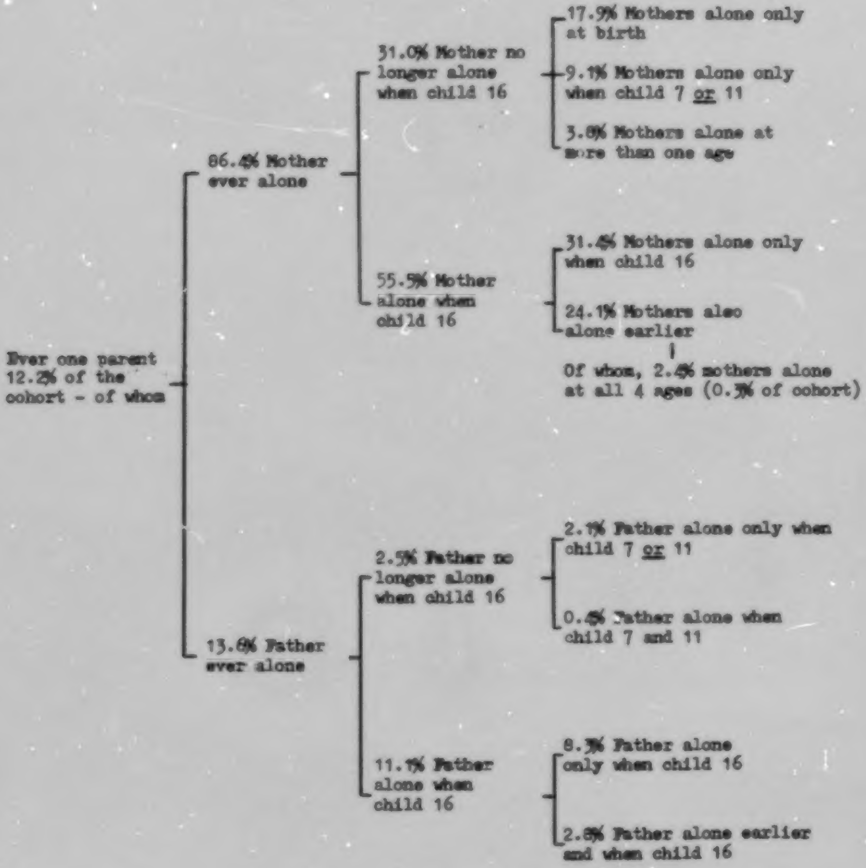
3.4% of the cohort were born illegitimate.
3.7% were living with a lone parent at the age of seven.
6.2% were living with a lone parent at the age of eleven.
8.4% were living with a lone parent at the age of sixteen.

These crude figures give some indication of the extent of change, although they would as easily been obtained from a series of cross-sectional studies. What we cannot judge is the extent to which the same children are affected at each age. The total proportion living in a one-parent family at any time between birth and sixteen could be anything between 8% and 22%. To identify the overlap and the change taking place, as is done in figure 1, a longitudinal study is necessary.

As can be seen, 12.2% of the children in the study had been living with a lone parent at the time of at least one of more follow-ups. This is of course a minimum estimate of the proportion of children with the experience, as it cannot take into account events between follow-ups.

The amount of change in their family situation experienced by these children is most dramatically illustrated by the tiny proportion (2.4% of those ever with a lone parent; 0.3% of the total cohort) who were with a lone parent at birth, seven, eleven and sixteen.

Figure 1 - Children in a one-parent family by the age of sixteen


Ever one parent 12.2% of the cohort - of whom
86.4% Mother ever alone
31.0% Mother no longer alone when child 16
17.9% Mothers alone only at birth
9.1% Mothers alone only when child 7 or 11
3.8% Mothers alone at more than one age
55.5% Mother alone when child 16
31.4% Mothers alone only when child 16
24.1% Mothers also alone earlier
Of whom, 2.4% mothers alone at all 4 ages (0.3% of cohort)
13.6% Father ever alone
2.5% Father no longer alone when child 16
2.1% Father alone only when child 7 or 11
0.4% Father alone when child 7 and 11
11.1% Father alone when child 16
8.3% Father alone only when child 16
2.8% Father alone earlier and when child 16

It may not be immediately obvious from the figure, but the ratio of fatherless to motherless families changes significantly as the children grow older. Overall, more than six times as many children had lived with their mothers alone as with their fathers alone. However, of those who had been with a single parent earlier, but were in a two-parent family by the age of 16, there were eleven times as many with their mother as with their father alone - many of the former being children whose mothers had been single at the time of their birth, but who later moved into two-parent families, either by the mother's subsequent marriage or by adoption. On the other hand, of those with a lone parent at the 16-year follow-up only, there were only 3½ times as many with their mothers as with their fathers.

Although the duration varies, lone parenthood appears to have been a transitory state for many families. More than two-thirds of those ever with a lone parent were in this situation at one follow-up only and of these the majority was in this situation at the age of 16.

Further insight into the changes taking place comes when we examine the reconstitution of families, that is those children who acquire a step-parent. Table 2 presents the proportion with step-parents, and in other situations, between the ages of eleven and sixteen.

Table 2 - Children with Step-parents

	Percentage
Both natural parents at 11 and 16	91.5
Natural mother alone at 11 and 16	3.4
Natural father alone at 11 and 16	0.3
Natural mother and stepfather at 11 and16	2.2
Natural father and stepmother at 11 and 16	0.5
Natural mother alone at 11, antural mother and stepfather at 16	0.8
Natural father alone at 11, natural father and stepmother at 16	0.2
Both natural parents at 11, natural mother and stepfather at 16	0.7
Both natural parents at 11, father and stepmother at 16	0.3

Again, it cannot be assumed that no additional change in family structure took place in the five years between follow-ups. Very probably, children with both natural parents at 11 and a step-parent at 16 experienced an intervening period with a lone mother or father, but it is unlikely that this applied to many children in the other groups - especially those whose family situation at 11 and 16 was the same. It is worth remembering, however, that the diversity and fluidity of parental care situations revealed is likely to underestimate the extent to which children have to adapt to changes in their family structure and relationships.

Secular Trends

The existence of the three national cohorts in Britain makes it possible to assess how children's experience has changed in the decades since the second world war. Table 3 compares family break-down by separation and divorce in the 1946 and 1958 cohorts. (The NCDS figures are not directly comparable with those reported so far, as the 1946 follow-ups did not include twins; illegitimate children or immigrants. NCDS data have therefore been re-analysed with the same exclusions.)

Table 3 - Family breakdown by separation and divorce in the 1946 and 1958 Cohorts

	1946			1958			
	By 6 years	6-15 years	Total	By 7 years	7-16 years	Not known	Total
All broken families	5.9%	7.2%	13.1%	3.9%	7.9%	1.1%	12.9%
Not broken			86.9%				87.1%

It is perhaps surprising that the overall amount of breakdown in the two cohorts is very similar. However, a larger proportion of the 1946-born experienced a break in the family when they were under six, probably reflecting the temporary increase in divorce rates in the immediate post-war years.

Table 4 compares the proportion of children with step-parents in the 1946, 1958 and 1970 cohorts. Although complicated by the different ages at which the relevant information was collected, it does reflect more strongly increases in both marital breakdown and in the 'reconstituted' family.

Table 4 - Children with step-parents in three cohorts

Age of Children	1946	1958	1970
4	0.6% (1)		
5			2.6%(3)
6			
7		1.6%	
8			
9			
10			
11		3.5%	
12			
13			
14			
15	3.5%(2)		
16		5.1%	

(1) Rowntree (1955) (2) Douglas (1970) (3) Burnell and Wadsworth (unpubl.)

Circumstances of Families in Different Situations

There is evidence from many studies of the adverse economic consequences of the loss of a parent, especially the father (eg. DHSS, 1974; Marsden, 1964), and this is well substantiated from the NCDS data. At the age of eleven, for example, almost half (47%) of the fatherless children had been dependent on Supplementary Benefit at some time during the year preceding the follow-up, compared with 13% of the motherless and 6% of two-parent families. Even more dramatically, no fewer than 17% of the lone mothers reported that Supplementary Benefit had been their sole source of income in the previous year. This was true of 1% of the lone fathers and 0.2% of the two-parent families.

It is important to note that at 16 those families now with two parent-figures but where the mother had been alone earlier in the child's life were still more dependent on state support (10% having received Supplementary Benefit in the previous year) than those families which had always had two parents (3%). Financial circumstances also varied according to the reasons for the loss of a parent. Sixteen per cent of widowed mothers alone at 16 had received Supplementary Benefit in the past year, compared with 47% of the separated and divorced.

Not surprisingly, children who acquired a step-parent usually experienced an accompanying improvement in their material circumstances. However, children with a stepfather were still in families which reported more financial difficulties and lived in poorer housing than families with both natural parents. Children with step mothers, who as we have seen would not have been so badly off during their period of lone parenthood, were indistinguishable in these respects from those living with both natural parents.

Family Relationships

At the 16-year follow-up a number of questions were put to both children and parents about how well they felt they 'got on together' and about frequency of arguments on a number of sensitive issues such as appearance, choice of friends and smoking and drinking. In general, the young people's view of their relationship with their natural parent(s) did not differ significantly between one and two-parent families.

There were however significantly poorer relationships reported in step families and this reflected discord between the child and the step parent, particularly if this was a stepmother, rather than the natural parent. Reported relationships were not consistently related to the age of the child at the time the step parent had joined the family, but there was a significant contrast according to the reasons for the natural parent's absence. For example, 81% of children whose natural mothers had died said that they got on well with their stepmother, but only 64% of those whose parents had divorced.

Children's Development

Put simply, children with a lone parent do less well, in terms of, for example, their school attainment.

However, we have seen that these children and their families also have to cope with being less well off financially, living in poorer housing and other facets of general material disadvantage. The same is true of course of many, though not so many, children with two parents. The question therefore arises of whether children in one-parent families do any worse than other children from similarly adverse material backgrounds. In other words, is it possible to demonstrate whether their poorer attainment is in some way the result of having only one parent *per se*, or of other co difficulties.

The breadth of data held by NCDS made possible the exploration of this question by means of multi-variate analysis, including measures of such background circumstances as independent variables additional to the parental situation variable.

The results of such analyses have been consistent in showing that, when the interrelation among such variables is taken into account, no statistically significant differences in reading and mathematics attainment remain between the two-parent and one-parent groups. Further analysis has suggested strongly that the crucial explanatory variables are the income measures, which explain the greatest proportion of the raw differences between the two groups of children.

Of course, the above could have been demonstrated as well with cross-sectional data, and these findings have really been described here as background for two further sets of analyses, for which longitudinal data were necessary. The first was concerned with progress (in this case between 7 and 11) of children in different family situations. The second addressed the question of whether there were any differences in children's attainment (at 16) according to the age at which family breakdown had occurred.

The question concerning progress is: given that there are differences in attainment at the age of seven between children from one-parent families and those from two-parent families, do the former fall further behind by the age of eleven, or does the gap narrow, or remain much the same? Because the study has test scores at both ages it is possible to examine this question directly, and it has been strongly argued (eg. Goldstein, 1979) that the appropriate method for doing so is analysis of variance, with 7-year scores as one independent variable, rather than, for example, analysing differences.

The results of one such analysis, of reading attainment, are summarised in table 5. For brevity, the fitted constants for parental situation only are presented. Other independent variables included in this particular analysis were: reading score at 7; social class; and sex.

Table 5 - Longitudinal analysis of progress in reading

Parental situation at 11	Fitted Constants	X^2(d.f.)
Two parents	0.35	
Fatherless: father dead	0.06	Two parent v fatherless: 3.47(2) $p < .05$
Fatherless: marital breakdown	-0.41	
Motherless: mother dead	0.00	Two parent v motherless: 0.49(2) $p > .05$
Motherless: marital breakdown	-0.35	

It can be seen that family situation was found to be related to reading progress, in that the children in two-parent families drew slightly, though significantly, ahead of those who were fatherless due to marital breakdown. Children living with widowed mothers and those in motherless families did not differ significantly from children in two-parent homes. The contrast between the two-parent children and those motherless due to marital breakdown is fairly large, but does not reach statistical significance, perhaps because of the relatively small number in the latter group.

The importance of the age at which breakdown of the family occurred was also investigated by analysis of variance. The results of the analysis of reading attainment are shown in table 6, where it will be seen that only the fatherless groups have been categorised in dètail. Because of the small number the motherless are included as one group, for comparative purposes only. Other independent variables in this analysis included: sex; social class; family size; amenities in the home; tenure of the home; usual household income; reason for the absence of one parent. It can be seen that the effect of adjustment for these factors is so great that the order of the fitted constants is changed, and children with both parents no longer have the highest scores.

Table 6 - Parental situation by age and reading attainment

Parental situation	Fitted Constants	X^2(d.f.)
Mother alone at 16		
and before child 7	0.05	4.2(5) $p > .05$
only after child 7	0.11	
Mother not alone at 16		
and before child 7	-0.09	
and after child 7	-0.04	
Father ever alone	0.03	
Both parents always	-0.06	

There is little variation among the one-parent groups. There is a slight tendency for the groups who gained a father-figure to have lower average scores than the children who were still fatherless, but the differences do not reach statistical significance. There was no consistent tendency from such analyses for children to differ in their test scores according to whether their family first broke up before or after they were seven.

Children's Expectations for Married Life

At the 16-year follow-up all children were asked questions about what they thought was the best age to get married; what age they would like to start a family; and what size family they would like to have. The majority of children wanted to get married in their early twenties and have two or three children, and this varied little with parental situation. Boys living with lone mothers alone at 16 more often said that they did not wish to marry at all - but this was still true of only a small minority, 7.5% as against 3.4% of those with both parents.

There was a suggestion that the more difficult relationships in step-families described earlier were associated with a lack of enthusiasm for marriage and children among some of the boys with stepmothers. Among girls with step-parents of either sex the same experience had perhaps kindled a desire to escape from the home as soon as possible, since significantly more of them favoured early marriage (at 19 or younger).

Intergenerational Continuities

Now that the twenty-three year follow-up has taken place it becomes possible not only to establish whether the above expectations have been borne out in reality, but also to examine the relationship between the experience of these young people as they grew up and their own partnership and family formation behaviour in early adulthood. As already mentioned, analysis of the twenty-three year data has barely begun and we are not yet able to report on the links between childhood and adult life.

However, we do know that, by the age of twenty-three, 57% of the women in the study had married. Thirty-three per cent of women had had one or more children and, of these, 24% had experienced a period of lone parenthood of at least one month's duration.

That what once were children in the cohort now have children of their own raises a further exciting possibility. The 1946 cohort now has a second generation study, following-up the first born children (Wadsworth, 1981). It is certainly our hope that it will also prove possible to add a similar dimension to the rich assembly of data already held by the National Child Development Study.

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Women workers on roster: Some implications for family life

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Introduction

This paper discusses some of the preliminary findings arising from a study of a group of women working full-time on a rotating roster as wardsmaids (cleaners). The workplace for these women is the Swanbourne-Graylands Hospitals complex, an institution operated by the Adult Psychiatry Division of the Western Australian Government's Mental Health Services. Until December 1979, the women were employed as wardsmaids on either a full-time, 5 day (Monday to Friday) basis, or on a part-time weekend (Saturday and Sunday) basis. The majority of wardsmaids worked an "early shift" (i.e. 7.15 a.m. to 3.45 p.m) with a minority working on "late shift" (i.e. 9.30 a.m. to 6 p.m.). Preference for one shift or the other generally related to family circumstances and domestic responsibilities and some women had in fact changed shifts as these circumstances changed. The weekend wardsmaids had what they considered to be permanent part-time work, with this work pattern being chosen primarily to enable them to have children minded by husbands or relatives while they were able to earn penalty rates for weekend work. After December 1979, a rotating roster was introduced by the employer, replacing this existing work pattern.

At a general level this paper describes some aspects of the inter-relationship between the work and family life of these women. Numerous recent studies have examined the ways in which married women with children combine their roles as workforce participants, housewives and mothers. (e.g Rapoport, R & R.N. 1971; Young, M. & P. Willmott, 1975; Harper, J. & L. Richards, 1979; Manderson, L. & C. Inglis, 1982). It was not intended that this research merely replicate other studies on a more limited scale, although it does in certain respects confirm some previous findings, as I will indicate. In part the study was undertaken to rectify the bias in other studies towards middle class women and thus to provide some data on working class women and the ways in which they combine paid employment with family roles. In addition, whereas some research showed women working alternate shifts with husbands to cover child care at home (Rubinstein, L. 1977), most studies of shift work have been concerned with male shift workers and the effects of this work pattern on their wives and families. (e.g. Commonwealth of Australia, 1980). The present study by contrast is concerned with female shift workers and the effects of this work pattern on their husbands and families. Previous research has indicated that working women, shift workers or not, still take the major responsibility for domestic work in addition to their paid jobs. (Harper, J. & L. Richards, op. cit; Hargreaves, K. 1982) Where changes in the domestic division of labour have been noted, with men doing more if their wives are working, these appear to have been primarily among middle-class couples. (See also Oakley, A. 1974). The present study focuses in part on the extent to which the workforce participation of these working class women has affected, if at all, the division of domestic labour (both childcare and housework). Finally, this piece of research may be seen to constitute a case study of a group of working class women who were faced with an organisational change in the workplace. It examines in what ways, if any, management's decision to alter the pattern of working days of these women produced a modification to the interaction between family and work.

Organisation change in the workplace - An Outline

Events leading to the organisation change began in May 1978, when the employer, Mental Health Services, wrote to the Hospital Employees' Industrial Union regarding a redundancy proposal for weekend wardsmaids. It was proposed to establish a total full-time domestic services staff rostered over seven days per week. As a result of this proposal, ninety-one weekend wardsmaids' positions would become redundant (with wardsmaids being given two months' notice of ceasing) and forty-five full-time rostered positions would be offered to weekend staff on a seniority basis.

In June 1978 2 different circulars (one to full-time wardsmaids and one to weekend wardsmaids) were distributed by the employer setting out the reasons for the proposed new staffing arrangements and details of how these would operate. It will be noted from the information contained in the circulars that the employer stressed the apparent benefits of the proposed roster and understated any disadvantages. There was some recognition however that the change would involve the women's families and that some women would not be able to work full-time on a rotating roster. The circular to full time wardsmaids contained the following information:-

> "To achieve an improved Domestic Service to the hospitals and to remove the present unsatisfactory staffing of the hospitals with two separate work forces, a rostered Domestic Service Staffing System is to be introduced.
>
> From a date to be determined, a continuous seven week roster will operate. Note example hereunder.

- INSERT TABLE 1 HERE -

> This type of roster will permit staff to know months ahead, of the days on which they will be off duty.
>
> Important Aspects
>
> (a) Saturdays and Sundays worked are paid at time and a half, resulting in an average increase per person of $148.20 (3rd Year rate) for a seven week period.
>
> (b) There are two, 3 day breaks in each seven week period.
>
> (c) Days off duty that fall on Public Holidays accrue a day in lieu.
>
> It is important to take into consideration the benefits that the new rostering will bring.
> 1. Extra Wages.
> 2. Continuous staffing of wards.
> 3. Opportunity to improve machinery methods and introduction of new cleaning chemicals because of continuity of staff with only one type of work force.
>
> The new system will reduce personnel and rostering problems and provide a better relationship between domestic staff with the opportunity to adjust the work load over seven days per week.
>
> The foregoing information has been supplied to you to enable you to know
> 1. What is proposed.
> 2. To enable you to fully consider the benefits you will personally derive from the system.
> 3. Discuss amongst your family and workmates all the factors involved.
> 4. The Domestic Services Superintendent or the Assistant Secretary, Mental Health Services are available for further advice if required."

The circular to the weekend wardsmaids contained less information about the proposed roster system, but did include the following:-

> "Week-end wardsmaid staff, like yourselves, have the opportunity to transfer to permanent full-time. Discussions are being held with your Union officials to determine the method of ceasing those who are unable to accept full-time employment."

In early July, at a union meeting held at the Hospital, strong opposition to the proposed roster was expressed, so members were asked to submit their objections in writing to the union office, and 73 letters were received - 41 from weekend workers and 32 from 5 day workers.

From July to November 1978 there was an escalation of the issue, with the union protesting on behalf of the workers, lodging an application with the Industrial Commission (No. 499 of 1968), meeting with officers of the Mental Health Services and participating in a conference with the Industrial Commissioner. At this conference in November, Mental Health Services produced a document which, among other things, set out more detailed reasons for the revised roster. In particular, weekend workers were singled out. The document stated:

> "The weekend wardsmaid service as presently constituted is unsatisfactory for the following reasons:-
>
> (a) The general attitude of the weekend staff is poor. The job is regarded as a fill in.
> (b) Frequent complaints from staff coming on duty on Monday that work has not been properly carried out.
> (c) Difficulty of contact - weekend staff not available till the following Saturday and corrective action loses its impact.
> (d) Continuing problems in sick relief situations - especially on Sunday.
> (e) No supervision of weekend staff and lack of knowledge and control by management.
> (f) Impossible to implement meaningful training programmes and lack of interest by workers.
>
> With staff on a seven (7) day roster, it is intended to introduce the spray burnishing method of cleaning, which is a better system than mop and bucket both from the Department's and the workers' point of view. Better work allocation and follow-up, and homogeneous work force will also improve efficiency overall."

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Early in December, the Union called another meeting of workers to discuss the reasons that management had given for wanting to introduce the new roster. The indignation of the workers at the allegations contained in the reasons cited above was apparent at this meeting and resulted in another 45 letters being written to the Union.

By this time and (after meetings with Union representatives) Mental Health Services indicated that they had carried out further investigations into the overall domestic services at the Hospitals in an attempt to equate their requirement for efficiency with some concession to the hardship problems of individual workers as indicated by the Union.

Shortly after this the Union's claim was heard by the Industrial Commission, but dismissed, and the matter referred to a conference the following day. This conference saw some minor concessions being made, but no basic change to the proposal to introduce the roster. The Commissioner's recommendations were rejected by union members both in meeting and in secret ballot. A further application was lodged by the union before the Industrial Commission (No. 658 of 1978) which was heard during February/March 1979. During this hearing, evidence was given by 23 workers and 2 expert witnesses and issues raised centred on the employee's right to a job and unfair dismissal. The Union claimed that the employer, by introducing a seven day roster system, was destroying jobs and making impossible the continued employment of many women. But the commissioner's judgement in the case dismissed the Union's claims, thus upholding the right of the employer to introduce the new roster system. However, conditions were imposed by the Commissioner which were intended to reduce the impact on the workers - including provision for the roster to be introduced gradually and a limited number of 5 & 2 day jobs to be reserved for cases of "hardship". So the introduction of the roster was delayed until December, 1979, with May 1980 being the deadline for all wardsmaids, except those exempt on hardship grounds, to change to the roster or cease employment at the Hospitals.

The Present Study

The research on which this paper is based commenced in mid 1981, over a year after the introduction of the roster. It was planned to interview 20-25 women working on roster as wardsmaids, some of whom had previously worked a 5 day week and some of whom had worked weekends.

The approval of Mental Health Services was sought in connection with the study and no objections to the research were raised as long as any interviews were conducted outside normal working hours. The approval and co-operation of the Hospital Employees' Union was also sought and gained.An introductory letter about the proposed study was distributed to all wardsmaids currently on roster who had been working at the Hospitals prior to the organisational change. Workers were asked to indicate whether they were willing to be interviewed about the effects of the roster system for themselves.

For the purposes of this study, 15 wardsmaids currently working full time on roster were interviewed, 13 of whom had previously worked 5 days a week, and 2 of whom had worked weekends. In addition, and for the purposes of comparison, 5 women were interviewed who had ceased work as wardsmaids as a result of the introduction of the roster. Of these ex-wardsmaids, 3 had worked weekends, and 2 had worked 5 days.

All the 15 wardsmaids currently working on roster were married women with children and all were migrants to Australia. In fact, they were almost exclusively migrants from the UK, with only 2 of the women being non-UK migrants (from Italy and India). 2 of the women had been in Australia for more than 20 years, 7 for between 10 and 20 years, 4 between 5 & 10 years and 2 for less than 5 years. One of the main reasons for the high proportion of British migrants among domestic workers in this study would appear to be the proximity of the workplace to a migrant hostel. Most of the women involved in this study had obtained jobs as wardsmaids at the hospitals soon after migration and had retained their positions even after moving out from the migrant hostel. Of the 5 ex-wardsmaids interviewed all were married with children, but only one was a migrant,(from the U.K.) with the others all being Australian-born.

Ages of the women working full-time on the roster ranged from 26 to 60 with 2 women being in their 20's; 3 women being in their 30's; 5 women being in their 40's; 4 women being in their 50's; and 1 women was over 60. Of the 5 ex-wardsmaids interviewed, 3 were in their 30's and 2 in their 50's.

All the women in the study had previous work experience, mostly in the unskilled sector. e.g. as shop assistants, factory workers or in other forms of domestic work (cleaning, waitressing etc). Although most of the women had ceased full-time paid work with the birth of children, a few had continued working, albeit with modified or reduced hours. One women was divorced; one separated; one a widow, two had husbands on invalid pensions, one had a retired husband and of the other fourteen women interviewed, all had husbands who could be described as blue collar workers of one sort or another (e.g. cleaner, porter, machine operator, fitter etc). So while almost all the women and their families can be described as migrant, all of them can also described as working class.

In addition to data obtained through interviews, additional information was provided by the Hospital Employees' Union in the form of access to letters written by members about the roster issue and access to transcripts of Industrial Commission hearings.

Organisational Change - Before and After

1 Problems Predicted

The work patterns which were chosen by these women prior to the introduction of the roster fitted their family situation. On the whole, weekend work suited women with young children, because husbands and relatives could do the childcare. Weekend workers were prepared to forego family weekends out of economic necessity. Full-time weekday work tended to suit women with older children at school or grown up, because it enabled them to participate in family life on the weekends.

A content analysis of letters written by those workers who objected to the introduction of the roster system was undertaken by the Union during 1978. In these letters, three main areas of social and family hardship, were predicted, involving disruption of financial commitments, child care arrangements and transport arrangements. Many women expressed anxiety about anticipated redundancy.

Many workers explicitly stated that they worked out of economic necessity and foresaw financial problems if they were forced to resign. As one weekend worker who subsequently resigned wrote:-

> "Husband worked in bush all married time, kids becoming unruly. Husband agreed to work in Perth to overcome above problem, wages have dropped $100 per pay. Therefore I need the job to supplement income. We have a new home, needs to be paid monthly plus furniture, car, etc."

And another comment:-

> "No way could we live on one income coming in"

And another:-

> "Owing to the building trade being as precarious as it is, my husband was retrenched in April and had to take another job which meant a drop of $60 per week ......My job at the hospital means a difference of keeping our home together or having to try and sell. There is no way that I could pay mortgage, pay bills and feed a family on my husband's wage, even at a basic level."

In addition to this concern about the need to work and the anticipated problem of meeting financial commitments if they were forced to resign, many of the women expressed anxiety about the need to change child care arrangements or the apparent impossibility or non-desirability of doing so. Changes to child care arrangements would cause not only disruption, but considerable cost. Some women would have to accept redundancy , others saw that child care costs would eat up their wage. Many weekend workers expressed concern about problems with unsupervised school children, not only in the school holidays, but before and after school.

Wrote one weekend worker who subsequently resigned:-

> "I have three children under 5. One is 1st year school. Second attends Pre School and needs to be picked up at 11.40 every day. The third is 19 months and stays at home. One attends Pre School once or twice a week. Rostered there also. I do not wish my children to become neglected. Also my eldest boy is withdrawn and needs a lot of time spent with him."

Another weekend worker who also resigned commented:-

> "I have two children aged 4 & 6 who will need to be looked after an hour before and after school on Monday to Fridays, whereas at the moment, my husband's 5 day week (Monday to Friday) allows him to look after them on the weekends. They would also have to be looked after during the school holidays"

Week-day workers tended to object to the proposed roster because they saw it virtually eliminating weekends with husband, family and friends, with only one full weekend off in the 7 week roster. In addition, many workers objected to working 6 days a week 5 weeks in a row despite the fact that the roster provided for 2,3 day breaks.

A final major area of concern to many of these women related to predicted transport problems. Many travelled to the hospital from outer metropolitan areas, sharing cars and costs with workers on the same work pattern or using the family car at weekends. Public transport was often non-existent or inconvenient.

As a weekend worker who eventually resigned wrote at the time:-

> "At the moment on weekend shift, I can have the car as my husband does not work at weekend...... we cannot afford a second car."

Despite such objections (i.e. regarding financial need, child care and transport problems), the roster was introduced, with some women retaining their 5 day or weekend jobs on the basis of hardship. Of the approximately 232 women workers employed at the time of the dispute, it is estimated that between January 1979 and May 1981, the time the research commenced, a total of 97 workers resigned. and whereas a number of these resignations would have occurred without any change to work patterns (i.e through retirement, move etc) it is apparent that the crop of resignations in the period December 1979 - May 1980 (a total of approximately 35) were directly related to the introduction of the roster.

Adaptations?

So many women did not in fact attempt to adapt to the introduction of the roster. When the deadline arrived they opted for resignation. Of those who did resign some were near retirement. Of the 3 younger weekend workers interviewed who resigned, it was apparent that they did not want to take on a full-time job because of their child care responsibilities. They saw themselves as part-time workers, with a financial need to work. As one of these women had written in her earlier objections to the roster

> "...it is very, very inconvenient....it is disrupting to family life and getting very close to the philosophy

> that one 'lives to work', whereas my philosophy is that 'I work to live'".

Two of these ex-wardsmaids had managed to find part-time employment working night shifts, as this work pattern enabled them to continue to combine their paid work and domestic roles in a way not unlike they had done previously.

For the former 5-day workers who went onto roster, adjustments in the family sphere mainly related to loss of weekends. For many, it was a case of having to get used to it, or leave. Many commented that they missed the weekends with their families, and that husbands were not keen on the weekend work their wives now had to do. But most of the women in this category had older children (i.e. teenage or older) and even though husbands were mainly responsible for the children at weekends when their wives were working, this did not amount to full-time care as such, rather just "being at home" with the children . As one woman said:-

> "Now they're all grown up and they're out roller skating, they've got their own friends. I think there's a bit of ill-feeling, (about me working weekends) but they're not bothered...."

But the woman in this category with the youngest children (ages ranged from 9 to 15) whose husband was a cleaner, was the one who reported most dissatisfaction with the roster. She thought she would never get used to working the roster:-

> "It's working the weekends I don't like.....That's when my husband is at home and my children are at home. It's just the weekends away from the family. My husband has got to bring me in and go back home. It messes his life about a bit. And the kid's life about a

> bit. You don't go out as much. We used to go away at weekends a lot .....I would like to have more outings with the family."

Despite such disadvantages involved in working weekends, a high proportion of women commented on an unanticipated advantage associated with having days off in the week as a result of the roster. And while positive comments about days off in the week related in part to more time available for housework and shopping, it was also mentioned as a time when the women could relax at home alone. As one women with 4 teenage children commented:-

> "I think it's the only time I can get any relaxation, whereas at weekends, I mean I like the weekends.... but when you're off, you never have time to yourself. Roster to me is, and I think to a lot of the women is good. Only on the selfish reasons, like at weekends when you're off with the family, you never stop, you're waiting on them hand and foot. Roster, when you have the days off in the week, it is the only time I can have five minutes to myself. Once you get your work done, you can sit down, relax. If you have the weekends off, you're worn out."

And other women commented:-

> "Being at home in the week....there's nobody around and if you've got anything to do, you can get straight through it and it takes you about a quarter of the time that it does at weekends when everybody's here....plus the fact that if there's sales on, you can get to them."

So, the roster provided an unexpected bonus for many of these working mothers in the form of mid week days off which, as well as providing time for domestic work, also permitted a degree of relaxation. This brief respite from the "dual role" was, for many of these women, tinged with a sense of guilt. Some of the women also liked the days off in the week to enable them to be at home some of the time with children during school holidays.

As a direct result of changing to work on the roster, some women had been obliged to learn to drive their own cars or re organise car-pool arrangements to accommodate the changed work pattern.

For the weekend workers who changed to working full-time on the roster, major changes involved child care arrangements, with both the women interviewed now using child care centres, whereas previously they had relied exclusively on husbands, and/or other relatives. The extra costs involved meant that their wages were little different than when they had worked only weekends.

The Division of Domestic Labour - Before and After

The women were asked about the division of domestic labour in the home - who does what with respect to particular family work, housework as well as childcare, and whether chores had always been organised that way. In general, all these women adhered very strongly to an ideology of domesticity, regarding their perceived duty in both housework and childcare spheres, which meant that they, not their husbands, still had the final responsibility for housework and childcare. Very few women in this study thought that a couple who were both working should share equally in the domestic work. Comments were very much of the order of "he doesn't do much, and I don't want him to", or "he does help when I ask him". This was the case even for those women who had worked more or less continously since being married and having families. For example, one women with 7 children (aged from 10-30) and a work history of almost continuous employment on either a full-time or part-time shift basis indicated that she did almost all of the household chores (including cooking, cleaning, washing and child related work), and always had done, although as the children grew older they did help in the home. She commented that her husband:-

> "...does certain chores without me asking. He is basically a tidy person and will put things away if he found them in a mess."

She had been able to carry out her dual role of mother and worker mainly with help in child-minding from her husband, relatives and neighbours.

It seems that this fact of husband's involvement in child-minding was an almost taken-for-granted aspect of the work patterns many of the women studied had either undertaken in the past or were presently undertaking. For most of these working class couples, the men had had to have some involvement in child minding if their wives were to work at all Whether the women had worked evening or night shifts in the past, or had recently been working weekends, husband's role in child minding was the basis of the work pattern undertaken. This was more especially and obviously so when part-time work undertaken by women outside of normal working hours was chosen to fit in with responsibilities for young children. In the case of the former full-time women workers with older children, husband's role in child minding had been minimal. But with the organisational change, husbands of roster workers were being involved directly in child minding responsibilities on weekends.

Whereas husbands had generally been involved in childminding at some stage during their wives' working life, there was much less evidence to indicate that they had been involved to any increased extent in housework. As Russell

(1983a:11) commented "Unlike housework, childcare and the needs of children create constant demands which cannot be put off to accommodate employment demands". As far as housework was concerned, most of these women did it themselves. One women in the present study who had changed from weekend work to full-time roster work made some interesting comments on this point. It should be noted that this woman had 3 children (aged 4, 6, & 8) and returned to the paid workforce as a weekend wardsmaid soon after the birth of her 3rd child. She said she only intended to work for a few weeks to get some money because her husband was on worker's compensation with a back injury. Her husband babysat at weekends while she worked; he only agreed to let her go for a month. He wasn't happy about her working, she said, because the youngest child was only 3 or 4 months old at the time. Having returned to the workforce part time almost by accident and intending it to be temporary, this women in fact commenced full-time work on the roster the following year. Her husband continued to look after the children while he was still on worker's compensation and when he returned to work, the 2 youngest went to a child care centre not far from her workplace and the eldest child by this time was at school. In answer to a question about what it was like now being a full-time working mother, she replied:

> "I have to make it work; otherwise he'll tell me to stop working. I always do the dishes and make the beds before I go to work, so he won't have any cause to complain about the state of the house. I'm really running in the morning-I've no time for breakfast myself, sometimes I don't even finish a cup of tea. I get up at 5 a.m. with the children - In winter when they are cold and sleepy, I feel bad about it. I make beds, dress the children, give them breakfast, wash dishes. He gets up at 5.45; he looks after himself, makes his lunch but I do everything for the children. I don't mind it being hectic. It's a struggle but I enjoy it really. If I sat at home all day I'd end up being miserable - and fat!

And another woman, who left her job as a weekend wardsmaid when the roster was introduced said:-

> "I've never got time to rest, very rare, there's always something going, very rarely I can sit down, I've got to go out and pay bills, do the shopping. I go over to the school. I do most of the housework, cooking and cleaning. He looks after the kids at weekends. He does help.....Sometimes he gets a bit lazy, then I've got to push him a little bit."

A former 5-day wardsmaid with 4 children who changed to the roster said she spent a lot of time working at night to catch up on housework.

> "Basically, I do everything" (including cleaning, laundry, shopping, gardening, rubbish removal.)

As far as meals are concerned:-

> "Well, me the majority, but my husband does now and again, curry. He does them if I'm working and he's off, he cooks the meals. He loves cooking. He'd spend a bloody fortune on it. I've told him, he couldn't stay home. Housework no, he'll not entertain that, but he'll cook, he'll wallpaper and paint, he'll do all things like that, But housework, no." Basically to be honest, I like to do it all myself, If they do it, I go over it, but when I'm tired and doing the housework and I get a bit grumpy and I'll start moaning and then everybody jumps".

This last comment reflects a similar point made by Rubenstein (1977:31)

> "Some women said that although their husbands were prepared to do housework, they did not want them to, either because they would not do the work properly, or because the women did not believe that men should do housework."

There was a small proportion of women who did state that their husbands shared some of the housework with them. These were all former full-time workers now on the roster. One women who still did most of the cleaning, but whose husband was now retired and did most of the washing, cooking and shopping, said that they had begun to share chores since she had been working full time.

> "You've both got to pull together, haven't you? He shares the work without having to be asked."

Conclusion

Some preliminary conclusions can be stated. For most of these working class women and their families, there seems to be little evidence of major change in the family sphere as a result of the change in the organisation of work. Some adaptation has been made by the women themselves as individuals adapting their own lives to the demands of working the roster. There has been little change in the domestic division of labour and it would seem that whatever the pattern in the allocation of household chores, this had already been established as a result of the wife's workforce participation before the roster was introduced. One change has been in the case of the former 5-day workers whose husbands now take full responsibility at the weekend for those children who are still at home. The former weekend workers now on roster expect, and get, little help from their husbands with either childcare or housework. This would appear to suggest that the attitudes and practices of the former part-time workers and their husbands concerning their respective duties in the household have, as yet, changed little as a result of the wife's full-time work on roster.

For all these working class women the ideology of domesticity and motherhood remains strong. Preliminary findings from this study confirm previous conclusions which suggest that although working class men in general have low participation rates in both child care and housework, there *is* a greater tendency for men to take part in child care than in housework. Whether this is because "working-class fathers find it less degrading to help with children than they do with the chores" (Harper & Richards 1979:191), or whether "housework may be boring but childcare is more pleasurable" (Hobson 1978:90) or whether some men are keen to share childcare whereas they are not as keen to share housework (Russell 1983:191) is not at this point altogether clear. And this needs further investigation. But the fact remains that the husbands of these women have had to be involved in a certain amount of childcare when their wives have been working, whereas housework, for the most part, can be, and mostly is, left to their wives. It has been suggested, (by Manderson, L. & C. Inglis, 1982:5 referring to Delphy, C. 1976) that childcare is *analytically* prior to housework, and that

> "this in part explains why even when men share housework with their employed wives, childcare remains the responsibility of women alone".

But the empirical findings of the present study suggest the reverse - i.e. even when men share child care with their employed wives, housework remains the responsibility of women alone. In this sense, then, the childcare component of the household contract necessarily and more immediately became subject to change when these mothers enter the paid workforce. But among these working class couples the housework component of the household contract has remained more resistant to change, with little evidence of either husbands taking over particular household tasks or wives being prepared to share or relinquish these.

Whereas, in granting certain exemptions to cases of "hardship", the Industrial Commissioner did recognise to a limited extent the adverse effects of the changed work pattern for these women and their families, the employer in introducing the roster, considered "efficiency" more highly than the human impact of the roster. To this extent then it is not easy to share the Rapoport's optimism about Australians meeting the challenge "to devise new patterns of inter-relationship between work, family and other interests that will allow the economy to flourish, encourage satisfactory family and community relations and yield up personal life satisfaction" (1981:29). For while employers can introduce new work patterns without regard to the original terms of employment or to the family situations of their employees, we see the development of a situation affecting working women such as the one outlined here. Forced resignation among women not prepared to adapt their lives to the demands of the job and loss of family time or increased domestic pressure for those obliged to adapt.

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Living on the land: Family decision making and farm production[1]

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INTRODUCTION

Farm families in Australia have a 'happy families' image. In advertisements and the media generally they are represented as getting on well together, making the family work and resisting the ravages of the climate with a united front. Very many farm families would see themselves in these terms and firmly resist any attempt to portray them in any other way. At the same time male domination is a marked feature of agriculture - it is the males who are perceived as 'farmers' and who often perceive themselves as the farmers.

The object of this paper is to examine one of the mechanisms by which that dominance is perpetuated. It will focus on one aspect only of the conduct of farming within a family context - that of discussing the decisions that are an integral part of running the business. It will examine various aspects of this discussion and compare other aspects of the work and experience of the male farm operators with the levels of discussion.

Family farming as it is practised in this country is potentially stressful (Craig and Killen, 1983). There are a range of sources of this stress - from the farming system used in this country and its small business associations to the 'typical' problems inherent in family life (such as life cycle and stage in the family) albeit exaggerated by the family operation of a business (Craig, 1983a). This business operation is increasingly a family legal arrangement as the majority of farms in Australia are owned and legally operated as family partnerships (see Table 1). The continuing trend to operation in some joint manner (as a family partnership or private company) has meant a major shift from the customary ownership of the oldest male that was once the dominant style. It is not however fully clear that this shift has been accompanied by any change in the family rules that recognises the new legal position of the wife.

The point is often made that this is merely a shift in the legal position, caused by people arranging their affairs to minimise income tax. This view suggests that there has been little significant change in the involvement of women in 'real' farming. One could hold the contrary view that there has been little change in women's involvement because they have always made a major contribution to farming. However many of those who put forward the 'tax minimising' argument believe male farmers are the sole or 'real' decision makers in farming and that the contributions made by women can safely be ignored. This view suggests that the term 'family farming' is largely a misnomer - while farmers have families and live in families, these families do not participate equally in the business of farming. The perceived male dominance in agriculture is then a real dominance.

DECISION MAKING IN FAMILIES

The study of decision making in families has largely taken place in the context of the study of family power (Olsen and Cromwell, 1975:7) and the methodology of these studies has been questioned extensively. Criticism has centred on the different results obtained using 'insider' (self report) and 'outsider' (observational) methods (Cromwell and Olsen, 1975:43), though as Cromwell and Olsen point out, not because of validity problems but because the focus of these two approaches is very different.

The self reporting method is open to the criticism of bias introduced by the desire to be considered socially acceptable and hence to play down involvement (or non-involvement) in decision making that is seen as deviant from the respondent's ideal self image (Gasson, 1980:174). Those non-farm studies which have compared husband and wife responses in terms of decision making have most often reported considerable discrepancy in the responses (see Olson and Cromwell, 1975:144 for a list of these).

The perceptions that people have of reality are nonetheless useful. The way that a person understands the situation can be assumed to influence that person's actions, even if the perception is not fully shared by others. In an intimate relationship like marriage it is likely that spouses will at least come to terms with the way that their partners habitually perceive the world.

Decisions once made are not often left as final and never re-examined (Turner, 1970:97). The circumstances that gave rise to the decision may change, or the outcome may show the decision to have been faulty in some way: thus decision making is in some sense a continuous process. Managing an agricultural unit involves this continual revision of decisions as the major inputs to the decisions (such as price relativities and climatic conditions) constantly fluctuate.

Turner (1970:99) suggests that there are two main kinds of family decision making. Less common are decisions that are made after discussion has dealt with all disagreement and consensus is achieved. Since all are equally and actively assenting, all are equally committed to implementing the decisions. Such decisions, whether in the family context or not, commonly take much longer and make more demands on verbal skills, mental flexibility and patience: this suggests that they are positively associated with both age and education.

The most common form of family decision making is that in which some of the participants in the process recognise that their views differ and yet assent in order to reach a decision (Turner 1970:78). Such a decision is an accomodative one; these range along a coercion/bargaining continuum. Concessions may be made now in order to gain something later, or in order to avoid the less pleasant consequences of dissent.

Turner suggests that accomodative decision making includes the concepts of conflict and dominance. The person in the family perceived to be the most closely identified with an accomodative decision will be perceived to be dominant in making that decision, both by themselves and by other members of the family. If this perception persists over time, then the person concerned is likely to become dominant - being seen as the one who makes the decisions and actually making them. The male members of farm families have historically and traditionally been most closely associated with the actual operations of farms, and have been seen as dominant. While women have also contributed to farm labour, their involvement has been limited by their physical strength[2], their lack of training in mechanical skills and by their traditional role of childrearer. Hence men have contributed a major part of the day to day operation of farms.

Traditional patterns of inheritance, whereby land ownership has been passed on to the oldest male child (Phillips, 1977) with farm women marrying in, have also contributed to the perception of men as dominant in matters concerning the use of the land. If men are perceived, or perceive themselves, as dominant, then it follows that they will also be perceived to be the major decision makers about farm operations, despite recent trends in patterns of legal ownership of agricultural establishments.

This study looks at the decision making process in farm families - namely the level of discussion between a male farmer and his spouse about decisions concerning the farm business. Given the historical/traditional perspective, we predicted that levels of discussion would be reported as higher in the aspects of the farm business related to financial management, as women are more likely to be legally jointly financially responsible, and lower in the area of day to day operations where women have been excluded or perceived as emergency labour only.

Such a conclusion presents a source of conflict and stress in an enterprise which combines both business and family aspects. This is especially so in those aspects of farming which overlap operational and financial matters.

METHODOLOGY

Because of the wide diversity of farm enterprises it is difficult to sample 'average' farmers. Respondents in this survey were selected on a stratified basis. Ten areas were chosen to represent the main types of agriculture in southern Australia (Sheahan, 1981:9). Within these areas a random sample was drawn using local Council records of land ownership.

Those selected were informed by letter, further contacted by phone and subsequently interviewed. The pastoralists around Broken Hill were too remote for interviewing and their data were collected by a mail questionnaire. Details of areas selected and numbers are in Sheahan (1981:9-10). The interviews were conducted with the principal operator who, in all but a few cases, was male. However many of the interviews took place with both husband and wife present and often responses were checked or confirmed with the spouse before a final answer was given. There were 393 respondents in the original survey: for this analysis all cases where a spouse was not resident with the respondent, for whatever reason, were excluded. This resulted in the 349 cases which are reported in this paper. As the survey had to do with information seeking behaviour of farmers, a large amount of material is not dealt with in this paper. Full details and a copy of the interview schedules and mail survey are found in Sheahan (1981).

The question of discussion concerning decisions is a vexed one. In the first instance such discussion may take place in such a context of domination that agreement is by far the most likely response. Even knowing the level of discussion may give little information about implementation (James, 1982:312). Previous research had suggested to us that about half of male farm operators claimed to always discuss major farm decisions with their wives (Craig, forthcoming). We thought that this might be conditioned on the topic of discussion (as outlined above) so this research included a multiple question on dicussion, listing areas of decision making ranging from 'family' type decisions (to do with household finance or estate planning) to 'farm' type decisions (to do with machinery purchase or new crops and livestock) and these topics are listed in Table 2.

Collecting data from only one member of the family presents the danger of a biased view. An examination of other studies in which both husband and wife contributed data reveals no comparative data on decision making (Wilkening and Bharadwaj, 1968; Wilkening and Guerero, 1969; Sawer, 1973; Wilkening, 1982). In some of these the data on decision making involvement is based on male reports, in some on the female reports, in others it is unclear, but there are no comparative tables, so that the present data at least offer only the same level of bias.

RESULTS

There has been a continuing trend away from sole legal ownership of agricultural establishments in Australia (see Table 1). Sole ownerships have gone from about one third of all establishments in 1976-77 to about one quarter in 1981-82. Joint operations which are usually constituted of family members (family partnerships and private companies) have risen over the period from 61 per cent to 65 per cent of all establishments. Other forms of legal operations (non family partnerships, estates, trusts and public companies) have also risen consistently through the period though their absolute numbers are still quite low. More and more farm families then are involved in joint legal and business arrangements in a formal way. In such situations discussion and decision making may have great ramifications on both the operation of the business and successful relations within the family.

TABLE 1 ABOUT HERE

While about 50 per cent of male farmers may state that they discuss major issues with their wives consistently and often (Craig, forthcoming) Table 2 suggests that the content of the issue has great bearing on how the male operator perceives the extent of discussion. While within a production household it is not always possible to distinguish 'family' from 'business' concerns (Craig, 1983b; Craig et al,1983), the respondents perceived that they 'always discussed' issues relating to the household and finances more than they 'always discussed' decisions to do with farm operations (see Table 2). Nearly eight out of ten suggested they always discussed financial decisions about the house, children or education; about four in ten always discussed new machinery purchase or new crops and livestock with their spouse. It is clear from Table 2, which is arranged in order of the proportion of 'always discuss' responses, that financial matters of all kinds are more commonly perceived as topics of discussion than farm operations, either day to day or to do with changes in the farm operations.

TABLE 2 ABOUT HERE

The discussion variables were entered into a factor analysis and Table 3 shows the rotated factor coefficients. Factor 1 which accounted for 80 per cent of the variance clearly represents a financial dimension.

All of the financial aspects load significantly on this factor. Factor 2 has to do with farm operations; the only variable which has a significant coefficient on both factors is 'farm finance'.

TABLE 3 ABOUT HERE

The discussion variables were summed to form a discussion index (see Table 4). The mean score over all respondents who answered all questions was 22.6, and the first and last quartiles ranged over scores 7 to 19, and 28 respectively (that is, about a quarter of respondents answered 'always' to all seven questions about discussion).

TABLE 4 ABOUT HERE

Other research had shown that discussion about decisions is related to such variables as age, education and farm work experience (Craig, forthcoming). We also hypothesised that discussion levels are related to different enterprises on the farm e.g. dairy enterprises have traditionally involved women in day to day operations much more than mechanised cereal operations. High levels of discussion with spouse might also simply indicate a preference for discussion as an information seeking mode. Analysis of variance of the discussion index with these variables (not shown in tables) showed no significant variance except in the case of years of farm work experience.

A discriminant analysis was performed using the first and fourth quartiles as the dependent groups and entering the variables mentioned above (see Table 5). The significant discriminating variables had to do with levels of discussion with related farmers and extension officers, and involvement with farming (years of farm experience and dependence on farm income). While 62.5 per cent of cases were classified correctly this represents only a modest improvement on the expected chance level of 50 per cent.

TABLE 5 ABOUT HERE

The results overall suggest that male farm operators distinguish the level of discussion that they have with their spouses about various family and farm issues. Financial aspects were clearly distinguished from farm operations aspects in the factor analysis. While the discriminant analysis suggested that discussion patterns with some significant others and involvement with farming were important distinguishing features between those who reported high and low discussion levels, the relatively low level of discrimination indicated that other variables not investigated were also important.

DISCUSSION

Male farmers are still commonly seen, and see themselves, as the principal operators of family farms, and are therefore identified within their families as the main decision makers in matters relating to farm operation and business. While women have increasingly moved into the sphere of legal equality in ownership of farm operations, they have not been accorded an equal level of participation in the operation and management of the farm. Farm wives are in fact being consulted differentially, with a higher level of consultation in matters of financial management, where they have some legal responsibility and a lower level in the sphere of farm activities.

For historical and traditional reasons it has been the male farmer who has been perceived as having the occupation of farming, and this does not appear to have changed despite a strong trend of change towards joint legal ownership patterns. In most businesses the major work oriented consultation will be with colleagues, or other 'experts' in the field and not necessarily with family members. The study results indicate that a factor which partly determines the level of discussion between husband and wife is the use the male farmer makes of consultation with other farmers - both relatives and others - that is, other people identified with the occupation of farming.

There is also a slight decrease in the recorded level of discussion with spouse as the farmer gains more experience in farming. Presumably he has built up a greater expertise and a network of colleagues, including perhaps a child who is becoming active on the farm and preparing to take over. The data do not reveal other variables which might influence the differential levels of discussion or consultation in the farm family. We suggest that the pattern of decision making in farm families related to the operation of the farm has been accomodative. In that process the person seen to be most affected by the decisions made, the male farmer, has been perceived as dominant, and this perception has translated into reality over time.

The ideology of family farming is one of harmony with oneself and nature - the ideal problem free way of life (Craig and Phillips, 1983). The family faces the ravages of nature and the blessings she provides with a united front. However there is evidence to suggest that the problem free farm family is a myth. There are conflicts related to the coalition of the family and the business of farming which can strain marital and family relationships (Gould, forthcoming; Craig and Killen, forthcoming). Although farm families rarely present at helping agencies it is our contention that they do experience conflict related to their occupations as farmers.

Farm wives are consulted differentially in matters of financial management and farm operations. Evidence elsewhere (Craig, forthcoming) suggests that women on farms generally have more formal education than their husbands who most often have left school at the minimum school leaving age to gain their practical education on the farm. The women are therefore often better qualified in matters of financial management, and when this is added to their status as partners it is not suprising that they are consulted in these matters.

One could suggest then that the different levels of discussion observed are appropriate, that they are a fair division of responsibility according to experience and qualification. However such an argument does not take into account the existence of overlap between the two aspects of the farm enterprise or the fact that both aspects have an impact on the family.

There is not a clear distinction between the financial and operations aspects of farming. For example male farmers reported high levels of discussion with their wives concerning financial arrangements about the house, children and education, but much lower levels concerning the purchase of new farm machinery. Yet the purchase of a new tractor or header can represent a substantial capital investment, and will for most farms require the sacrifice of something else on the part of the farm or the family. Hence discussions the family may have had about redecorating the home, educating the children or taking a holiday off the farm, may be overruled or postponed - with the male farmer making the decision. Such situations set the scene for resentment and conflict, even if the farming ideology prevents feelings being expressed. Gould (forthcoming) presents such situations as contributing to depression, with farm wives feeling that they have little more to contribute than breeding the next generation of farmers.

Another aspect of the overlap of farm and family matters is concerned with inheritance of the farm. While retirement and passing on the property is clearly a financial management and a family decision, in actuality the decision about who will inherit the farm is made very early in the life of the family . Potential inheritors are usually very heavily involved in the day to day operations of the farm long before they inherit, and there is usually some understanding about this. Hence women may feel that in reality they do not have an opportunity to contribute to decisions about inheritance (James, 1982).

The changing legal status of women on farms, together with the changing roles of women in Australian society generally presents another source of conflict about decision making in farm families. Because many women are part owners of farming enterprises the potential exists for the farm business to dissolve if the marriage dissolves, and for the wife to receive a settlement equivalent to half of the property, along with custody of the potential heir. In-laws can then become very suspicious of an incoming bride with resultant extra pressures on the new marital relationship. The marrying child, usually a male, may need to sort out conflicted loyalties. The older generation may wait longer before passing on the active management of the farm to the couple, giving the marriage a testing period first. Because of its implications a healthy marital relationship becomes an issue of good farm management as well.

Another source of farm family conflict is the growing number of young women on farms who are interested in the occupation of farming, and who are thus potential competitors with their brothers for the inheritance of land and farming operations. With the general higher level of education of farm wives and concomitant social awareness there might be a tendency for women to support their daughters, or at least to be caught up in competing loyalties, and so to demand a greater input into the decision.

As the gaps close between what women and men can do on farms (farming is less and less based on sheer physical strength, and women can learn mechanical skills) and more women identify themselves with the occupation of farming there is potential initially for greater overt farm family conflict in decision making. The decision making pattern as described in this paper is a mechanism for keeping women out of the occupation of farming without the overt expression of conflict. This can give rise to potentially high levels of depression among farm women (Gould, forthcoming).

CONCLUSION

The authors have previously suggested strategies for intervention in farm family problems, making use of the family's own helping networks as well as outside agencies (Craig and Killen, 1983). While decision making in the farm business context cannot be divorced from its implications for the family and the marital relationship a focus on improving the latter will not necessarily bring about a change in the former. It is our contention that male farmers dominate in the area of decision making because they see themselves, and are seen by family members, as most affected by the decisions made. It would seem that the effects of the decisions on the family are of secondary importance.

If in fact farmers see themselves in the role of business managers and primary decision makers, and given that the farm and family spheres are difficult to separate, then one solution to conflict may be to educate farmers in effective communication and decision making skills as a management technique. A reduction in family conflict, which would result from improved communication and consultancy skills, would almost certainly have a positive impact on the overall farm operations.

NOTES

1. The research for this paper was funded by the Commonwealth Extension Services Grant. We would like to thank Basil Sheahan especially for allowing us access to the data.

2. The introduction of widespread mechanisation in agriculture has reduced the need for sheer physical strength in farming. Before mechanisation women were nevertheless involved in such operations as hand harvesting and dairying. It was mainly in the controlling of heavy draught animals that their strength was not sufficient.

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TABLE 1 LEGAL STATUS OF AGRICULTURAL ESTABLISHMENTS (Percentages)

Year	Sole owner	Joint family	Other
1976-77	34.7	60.9	4.3
1977-78	32.8	62.2	4.7
1978-79	31.2	63.7	5.0
1979-80	30.7	64.0	5.2
1980-81	29.4	65.1	5.5
1981-82*	28.6	65.2	5.8

* There was a change in the base figures in 1981-82 from Estimated Value of Operations of $1500 to $2500

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics

TABLE 2 FREQUENCY OF DISCUSSION ABOUT VARIOUS FARM AND HOUSEHOLD DECISIONS (percentages).

Variables*	Always	Regularly	Sometimes	Never	(n)
Financial arrangements concerning house, children, education	79	12	4	4	340
Off farm investments	70	13	11	7	306
Financial arrangements concerning farm matters	61	14	14	11	342
Estate planning and taxation	60	16	18	7	342
Day to day farm operations	50	26	19	6	344
New machinery purchase	44	14	19	23	339
New crops or new livestock	43	15	19	23	327

* Rearranged from their order in the survey.

TABLE 3 FACTOR ANALYSIS OF DISCUSSION VARIABLES

Variables	Rotated factors FACTOR 1	FACTOR 2
Off farm investment	.8563	.1538
Farm finance	.6544	.4124
Household finance	.5789	.2111
Estate planning	.5787	.2958
New crops, livestock	.2189	.9481
Machinery purchase	.2724	.7662
Day to day operations	.2985	.4604

TABLE 4 DISCUSSION INDEX: ADDITIVE SUMMARY OF DISCUSSION LEVELS

Score	Frequency	Percentage
7-9	73	25.9
20-23	64	22.7
24-27	66	23.4
28	79	28.0
	282	100.0

Mean: 22.6 Median: 23.7

TABLE 5 DISCRIMINANT ANALYSIS
[Groups based on highest (1) and lowest (2) quartiles]

	Discriminant Function Coefficient
Amount of discussion with related farmers	-.5111
No. of years of farm work experience	.4874
Importance of dairy enterprise	.4157
Amount of discussion with extension workers	.3672
Percentage income from farm	-.3443
Education level	.2825
Area of property	.2275
No. of children working on farm	.2039
Amount of discussion with non related farmers	-.0526
Hours of reading per week	-.0442
Importance of wool enterprise	-.0324
Importance of Cereal enterprise	-.0289
Age	-.0106

Canonical correlation .3057

Cases correctly classified

Actual group	Predicted group 1	Predicted group 2
1. Low discussion	42 (57.5%)	31 (42.5%)
2. High discussion	26 (32.9%)	53 (67.1%)

Percentage correctly classifed 62.5

Cohabitation and marriage: Family environments in formal and informal contexts

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Unmarried cohabitation in Australia has already passed the trial period and has entered the stage of consolidation and partial institutionalisation. Laws have been introduced, reformed, and/or amended in order to regulate or control this life style, while legal practices have been introduced to deal with disputes between cohabiting partners. To a certain extent, cohabitation seems to have become a new form of marriage, which in certain cases is imposed upon some individuals without their knowledge or will (see e.g. S. Sarantakos, 1982a).

The Sociological research on cohabitation falls far behind the progressive attitude and practice of many Australian states and is still in its infancy. Apart from a few reports (e.g. Cunningham and Antill, 1979; and Sarantakos, 1982b) the sociological literature on this subject is very poor. Australia seems to be very far behind other countries which have produced significant studies on the structure, process, and interrelationships of cohabitation (e.g. Trost, 1979; and Wiersma, 1983).

The obvious consequence of the pausity of sociological research in the area of cohabitation is that we know very little about the nature of this relationship and the quality of life in this life style, especially in comparison to marriage. Several questions related to the interpersonal relationships of cohabiting partners, their personal growth and development, and their system in themselves as well as in comparison to marriage need an urgent answer.

To offer an answer to some of these questions is the aim of this paper.

APPROACHING FAMILY ENVIRONMENTS

The basic question dealt with in this paper is about the relative quality of family climate in both cohabitation and marriage. Does cohabitation offer a family environment that is equal to or even better than that of a marriage? This question has been asked by the the author (1982b) with respect to structural as well as legal aspects of cohabitation, and with regard to the question about whether it is better to cohabit or to marry.

Similar questions have been asked by other sociologists; some of them have attempted to measure cohesion and adaptability (Russel, 1980), while others have been interested in conflict and violence among cohaibtants and marrieds. Yllo and Strauss (1981) for instance, studied the question about whether cohabitants are generally more violent than marrieds. Similar issues were studied by Risman et al (1981) and Glick and Spanier (1980), while Polansky et al (1978) compared marriage and cohabitation on three interpersonal variables i.e. affective support, mutual knowledge, and relationship satisfaction.

In the present study we employed the Family Environment Scale (FES) developed by R. H. Moos (1974, 1975a, 1975b) which includes three groups of dimensions, i.e. the relationship dimensions (i.e. (i.e. cohesion, expressiveness, and conflict), the personal growth dimensions (i.e. independence, achievement orientation, intellectual-cultural orientation, active recreational orientation, and moral-religious emphasis), and the system maintenance dimensions (i.e. organisation and control). The scale consists of 90 true/false statements with 'true' meaning the presence or encouragement of a specific behaviour in the unit concerned, while 'false' answers are taken to indicate the absence of these characteristics. Each dimension forms a subscale for which separate scores ranging from zero to 9 are recorded, with higher scores meaning a high emphasis on the characteristics under study. (Moos, 1974)

Two forms of FES have been used, the R form which measures the real attributes of the unit, and the I form which measures the ideal or preferred status of the system. The difference between the scores achieved by two members of the unit presents the incongruence score of these members, and indicates the difference of the partners in the perception of their relationship. The difference between the scores of the R scale and the I scale indicates the degree to which cohabitants and marrieds see themselves living up to their ideal standards and allows us to ascertain the 'degree of success' of the two units.

The two cales were administered to 330 cohabiting couples and 330 married couples matched with respect to age, occupation, education, family size and length of the relationship. The R scales were administered first and the I scales later. Each partner was asked to answer the statements separately. In the rule, the one partner answered the statements without assistance while the other was interviewed. The I scale was left with the respondents and was picked up a week later.

The data of this study were analysed as they were recorded independently, as well as in the context of information gathered by means of a qualitative study conducted previously. Nevertheless, the study provides independent data and is largely descriptive. In the following pages the findings of the study will be presented. We shall look first at the interpersonal relations, then at the personal growth dimensions and finally at the system maintenance dimensions. The degree of incongruence and the relationship between the R scale and I scale will be discussed - with some additional issues - in the last section of the paper.

1. Interpersonal relationships

The dimensions considered while assessing the quality and degree of interpersonal relationships in the two systems were cohesion, expressiveness, and conflict. Beyond these variables which were originally included in the FES, additional dimensions were also considered. While the three first variables (cohesion, expressiveness, and conflict) were studied also by means of the FES other variables were tested by means of intensive interviewing.

1(a) Cohesion - The interest of sociologists and psychologists in cohesion has been very strong, and several studies have appeared during the last ten years on this issue. The findings are, however, contradictory. The question about whether cohabiting and married partners are concerned with and committed to their unit and helpful and supportive of each other has been answered in some cases in favour of cohabitants and in other cases in favour of marrieds. For example, while Chipps (1978) reports that cohabitants display independence, freedom, deep commitment, and faith to one another, Johnson (1968), Lyness et al (1972) and Lewis et al (1975) argue that cohabitants are less committed to each other and to their relationship than marrieds or steadily dating couples. Findings supporting this last point of view were produced by a recent Australian cohabitation study (Sarantakos 1984).

Clear evidence of this issue was given by the present study. Considering the amount of help and support offered to one another, the degree of meaningfulness of life around home, the feeling of togetherness, the readiness to contribute to family tasks, the backing-up of other members of their unit, the group spirit, the degree to which they get along with each other, and the time and attention devoted to everyone in the group,(*) cohabitation fell far behind marriage. Cohabitants scored lower ($\bar{x}$ score: 3.4) than marrieds ($\bar{x}$ score: 6.9). This is to say that the proportion of cohabitants who feel committed to and concerned with as well as helpful and supportive of their partner and their unit is smaller than that of the proportion of the marrieds. Many cohabitants are committed to their unit and their partner but not as many as marrieds. In addition, further questioning has shown that cohabitants consider marriage as more commiting than cohabitation. Many cohabitants have stated that they would feel more committed had they been married.

An obvious corollary of commitment and cohesion is the stability of the unit and the degree of security members of both systems feel to have in their units. Trost's (1979) statement that the dissolution rate among cohabitants is about double that for married couples has been supported by many overseas studies, with some writers arguing that this dissolution rate is far too low. Elliot (1970:58) found that marriage offers greater stability, security, and social convenience than cohabitation; Corbin (1978:162) states that cohabiting couples have a 7-8 times higher dissolution rate than married couples; Croake et al (1974) reported that 36 percent of their respondents were cohabiting for less than one month; Peterman et al (1974) arrived at similar conclusions; Danzinger (1978:59), finally, reported that only 38 per cent of the cohabitants studied were living in 'stable' relationships.

In the cohabitation study (Sarantakos, 1984) only 44 per cent of the cohabitants thought that their relationship was stable. The remaining cohabitants either were not sure about the status of their unit or had serious doubts about its stability. Many were attempting to rationalise by stating that cohabitation is not meant to offer security but rather freedom and independence. The statement 'you can't opt for cohabitation and expect to live in marriage, you know' given by a cohabitant, seems to be common among some cohabitants.

1(b) Expressiveness - Are cohabiting and married couple 'allowed and encouraged to act openly and to express their feelings directly'? This area of interpersonal relationships has not been studied adequately, overseas or in Australia, at least with respect to cohabitation. Nevertheless, assumptions were made by some writers suggesting that cohabitation, due to its nature as an informal unit and a liberated zone of human behaviour, allows more expressiveness than marriage.

In our study an attempt was made to ascertain whether members of both units often keep their feelings to themsleves, say anything they want around the home, feel that it is hard to 'blow off steam' at home without upsetting somebody, tell each other about their personal problems, often just pick up and go if they like doing something on the spur of the moment, and whether someone usually gets upset if one complains; whether money and paying bills is openly talked about in the relationship; whether they are usually careful about what they say to each other, and whether there are a lot of spontaneous discussions in their marriage or cohabitation unit.

The response of cohabitants and marrieds to these points was similar. The mean scores were 5.2 and 5.9 respectively. For both groups expressiveness was found to be moderate except for some extreme cases, which were more common among the cohabitants than among the marrieds. Most cohabitants have admitted that the form of the relationship, i.e. being formal or informal, does not have any effect on the way people express themselves in intimate contexts.

Many marrieds and cohabitants seem to enjoy some degree of expressiveness. They seem to equally enjoy companionship in their relationship, and the quality of their companionship seems to depend on the economic status rather than on the legal status of the unit. In addition, employment of the wife accompanied by sharing of household tasks at home seems to promote companionship among some respondents.

Empathy, in the form of understanding, caring, listening, and sharing feelings, experiences, and thoughts and as a part of expressiveness has been identified among cohabitants and marrieds. There was no significant difference between both groups in quality and type of empathy reported and stressed in the interviews. It was considered by both the marrieds and the cohabitants as very significant for providing encouragement, affirmation, recognition, approval, and reinforcement. Cohabitants were reported to have chosen cohabitation because they thought that this life style could promise more empathy than marriage could offer. Marrieds on the other hand were of the opinion that marriage offers a better environment for the growth of empathy than cohabitation. In spite of their ideological differences, however, the view of many cohabitants and marrieds regarding empathy was positive and strong.

In addition to companionship and empathy, physical affection constitutes the third element of expressiveness. The common view of some Australians that cohabitants are sexually liberated or even 'oversexed', and cohabitation is an immoral relationship. Despite these largely unfounded beliefs, cohabitants were found to be as 'normal' or 'abnormal' as marrieds are. Studies have reported that cohabitants are sexually exclusive and non-promiscuous, (Croake et al 1974) that for many people living together sex is of secondary importance in the relationship (Lyness et al 1972; Jacques and Chason, 1979), and that sexual fidelity and extreme loyalty were paramount in the relationships of many cohabitants. (Thorman, 197.) Sex practices were reported to differ according to class, education, age, and degree of religiosity of the subjects and not according to legal status of the relationship.

FES data as well as interview results have shown that there is no great difference between cohabitants and marrieds regarding their quality and/or degree of expressiveness.

1(c) Conflict - Struggles over limited resources and/or incompatible goals are not uncommon in both marriage and cohabitation. Thus, the question in this context is not about the existence of conflicts in these systems but rather about their quantity and extent. In some cases conflicts are 'settled'by the partners; in other cases they do cause severe disruption of the relatoinship or even dissolution of the unit.

When employing the FES our interest was concentrated on whether the partners fight a lot, become openly angry, sometimes get so angry that they throw things, ever lose their tempers, criticise each other, sometimes hit each other, try hard to smooth things over and keep the peace, try to one-up or out-do each other, and whether they believe that one does not get anywhere by raising one's voice.

Cohabiting couples have been found to be more involved in conflicts than married couples, with the former achieving a mean score of 3.6 and the latter 6.4. There are more cohabitants reporting conflicts than marrieds. There are also more cohabitants than marrieds who were reported to become openly angry, to lose their temper, and to throw things against their partner.

Apart from this, further analysis of interview data shows differences also in the type and level of conflicts. While marrieds employ largely 'cold-war conflicts' and 'aggressive communication', proportionally more cohabitants used in addition 'violent conflicts' to express their dissatisfaction with certain aspects of their interpersonal relationships or to settle certain problems with their partner. 'Cold-war conflicts' included largely 'active withdrawal', keeping distance from the partner, displaying disinterest in the other's thoughts and activities, refusing to communicate with the partner, and attempting to irritate the other in any possible way.

In the form of aggressive communication, conflicts were expressed verbally, e.g. by arguing loudly, crying, and/or verbally assaulting the partner, while in case of a violent conflict physical violence involving several members of the unit was present.

The relatively higher incidence of conflicts in cohabitation may be caused by the factors and conditions to which this life style is exposed, and which are less common in marriage. Some of these factors affect the whole life style, orientation, and position of the cohabitants in their unit and the whole community, while others cause stress, confusion, and disorientation of the partners, thus disturbing their relations with the wider community and their interpersonal life. Such factors are, for instance, lack of security, feelings of guilt and inferiority experienced by some partners (especially women), and the reaction of relatives, friends, the church and the community towards this life style. Thus, life in cohabitation is more difficult than it is in marriage, and the latter is less likely to encounter certain problems than the former.

2. Personal Development

The second major dimension of family environment incorporated in the FES is the personal growth dimension which measures the degree to which certain developmental processes are fostered by marriage and cohabitation. These processes are independence, achievement orientation, intellectual-cultural orientation, active recreational orientation, and moral-religious emphasis. Do marriage and cohabitation differ in this aspect of family environment?

2(a) Independence - Cohabitation is by nature a system that encourages independence and discourages formality while marriage is supposed to do the opposite. How do these theoretical assumptions correspond to their real structure?

The FES items related to this issue study a number of aspects of independence, namely whether people do things on their own very often, are strongly encouraged to be independent, think things out for themselves, come and go as they want to, encourage privacy, rely on themselves when problems come up, strongly encourage each other to stand up for their rights, believe that it is hard to be by oneself without hurting someone's feelings, and whether they are really encouraged to speak up for themselves.

The responses to these items present a quite surprising image of cohabitation. Cohabitants are relatively more dependent on their partner than marrieds are. Their scores are 4.3 and 6.4 respectively. Once again it is shown that principal issues such as independence are being influenced by factors which may be affected by the formal status of the unit.

2(b) Achievement Orientation - The FES describes achievement orientation as 'the extent to which different types of activities (e.g. shcool and work) are cast into an achievement oriented or competitive framework'. The scale items which correspond to this dimension aim consequently to identify the existence of certain indicators of achievement orientation as perceived by the subjects. The statements included in the scale refer to feelings of considering it as important to be the best at whatever one does, and to get ahead in life, the significance money has to the subject, the belief in competition and improvement, the significance of job promotions, school grades etc., the ambition to try hard in order to succeed, the priority of work over play, and the evaluation of own achievement in the context of the achievement of others.

Cohabitants and marrieds displayed similar scores in this dimension (5.1 and 6.0 respectively). There were of course diverse responses given by certain groups for instance with respect to class, age, marital status, employment status, etc.. However, in the context of similar groups (e.g. young cohabitants and marrieds, or married and cohabiting pensioners) the difference in the responses was minimal. Liberated cohabitants were slightly more ambitious and achievement orientated than their married counterparts (e.g. middle class marrieds) but this was counterbalanced by the achievement scores of young cohabitants which were relatively lower than those of their married counterparts. There were also relatively more cohabiting women than married women expressing an active interest in achievement at school and work.

The FES findings were confirmed by the data collected by means of interviews. Neither marrieds nor cohabitants perceived their life style as being more conducive to achievement orientation than its counterpart. It was felt that believing in getting ahead, in improvement, competition, and success is a personality attribute that can grow equally in marriage and in cohabitation. The system might provide some difficulties in implementing these ideas in the areas of interest of a person; however, these difficulties can easily be overcome by relevant arrangements in the life and environment of a person. There were, for instance, as many successful career women living in marriage as there were successful career women living in cohabitation.

Nevertheless there were some doubts expressed by some cohabiting women regarding the assumed opportunity provided by marriage to married women to achieve to their capacity. The arguments were of ideological nature however, and were not supported by the data offered by this study; as indicated above, married and cohabiting women were equally successful/unsuccessful in their school and work.

2(c) Intellectual-Cultural Orientation - Are cohabiting and married couples equally concerned about political, social, intellectual, and cultural activities? The view has been expressed that cohabitants are more interested and involved in these issues than marrieds. Is there any evidence for this assumption?

In this study several indicators have been employed to identify the degree of interest and participation in intellectual and cultural activities of the subjects. The areas considered in this attempt were, as stated in the FES, the frequency of discussing political and social problems and of attending lectures, plays and concerts, the importance they give to learning new and different things, the interest in cultural activities, the extent to which intellectual issues are being discussed and musical instruments are played, the frequency of using libraries, reading and watching television, and the interest in music, art and literature.

The findings show that there is a moderate difference between cohabitants and marrieds with respect to to their intellectual and cultural interests and activities. Their scores were 4.9 and 6.2 respectively. For example, both marrieds and cohabitants participate in those activities, and the factors which seem to influence their decision in this context are availability of relevant facilities in the community, availability of transport, and quality of home environment. The formal status of the relationship seems to influence the degree of participation or interest in these activities only to a certain degree.

Thus, there is no evidence supporting the assumption that cohabitation provides better opportunities for a more rewarding cultural and intellectual life. Some cohabitants might be more involved in cultural activities than marrieds in general. However, a group-to-group comparison shows that cohabitants are not more involved in the cultural-intellectual activities than marrieds.

2(d) Active-Recreational Orientation - Related to intellectual-cultural orientation are the recreational and sporting activities. For this reason, the assumption about the quality of life made with respect to cohabitants in the previous section holds for this section too. Cohabitants are usually thought to be more involved in recreational activities and in activities of a higher quality than marrieds. Can this assumption be supported with evidence?

The instruments used in the FES provide some information on this issue. The indicators employed for this purpose are related to whether week-ends and evenings are spent at home, the frequency of friends coming for dinner or visits, the active involvement in sport, going to movies, sports events, camping etc., having hobbies, the degree of involvement in recreational activities outside work or school, attending courses or taking lessons for some hobby or interest outside of school, going out a lot, and the degree to which they watch television and listen to the radio.

Both, cohabitants and marrieds, employ a similar pattern of recreational activities. The findings of this study show that most of the available leisure time is spent by both groups at home. Similarly, both groups spend a significant part of their leisure time in sport and watching television. As the interview results have shown, factors such as age and residence of the partners, employment status of the female, presence and age of children, availability of adequate leisure time facilities and of child care, and allocation of household tasks seem to influence the selection of recreational activities of the respondents. The scores of cohabitants and married partners were 5.2 and 6.7 respectively.

Leisure was perceived by both groups of our sample in positive and utilitarian terms, with an emphasis placed on relaxation, pleasure, recuperation, stimulation and socialisation. For almost half of all respondents (married and cohabitants equally) leisure was considered as important as work, and was pursued in many cases by both partners together.

Thus, there is no evidence supporting the assumption that cohabitation provides a better environment for leisure and recreation than marriage. On the contrary, marrieds seem to demonstrate a higher mean score than cohabitants in this context.

2(e) Moral-Religious Emphasis - The traditional position of religious institutions to cohabitation has led many people to believe that cohabitation is a sin, and that cohabitants are sinners. They are held to be non- or antireligious persons and in certain cases they are threatened with excommunication from their church or punished in some way. To test this hypothesis is the purpose of the last dimension of the personal growth section of the FES.

The FES items which were related to the moral-religious activities dimension of the scale refer to the frequency of attending religious activities and services, saying of prayers, discussion of the religious meaning of important holidays, belief in heaven, hell, or that some things have to be taken on faith, the existence of strict ideas about what is right and wrong and the degree of their acceptance by the family members, the significance of the bible, and the belief that sinners will be punished.

The response to these items by the subjects indicates that there is some difference between cohabitants and marrieds with respect to their religious-moral emphasis. There are more marrieds than cohabitants who seem to adhere to moral and religious values. This is more so in the area of religious-moral practice (as against religious beliefs and values), where marrieds score significantly higher than cohabitants. In the area of beliefs and standards marrieds score still higher than cohabitants but to a lesser degree. The overall mean score of the cohabitants is 3.8 as against 5.3 of the marrieds.

Cohabitants were found to be less traditional, less demonstrative and less dogmatic in the area of religious beliefs and behavior. Although the argument presented by some theorists (e.g. Cunningham and Antill, 1979) that cohabitants are currently more likely to identify themselves as atheists or agnostics could only be true for one (relatively small) group of cohabitants (the liberal cohabitants), our results support sociological findings of overseas studies (e.g. Strong, 1978; and Jacques and Chason, 1979) which only suggest that cohabitants are religiously less active and motivated than marrieds.

3. System Maintenance Dimensions

In this last area of family environment we are interested in the patterns of organisation and control which systems employ to ensure an optimal operation and a high degree of effectiveness for their members and the community. The study of these two dimensions - organisation and control - will enable us to assess the quality of environments of the two systems under discussion.

3(a) Organisation - Moss (1974:4) states that organisation 'measures how important order and organisation are in family in terms of structuring the family activities, financial planning, and explicitness and clarity in regard to family rules and responsibilities.' The items he included in this dimension in order to evaluate the subject's perception of organisation in a certain unit are related to the degree of planning of family activities, existence of neat appearance and order in the home, the effectiveness of household arrangements (e.g. finding things when needed), the importance of punctuality, personal integrity (not changing their mind frequently), neatness of the rooms of the partners, clear definition of duties, handling of money, and timing of performing household tasks.

The assumed liberal structure and organisation of cohabitation quite often quoted by many writers have found no support in this study. Cohabitation and marriage seem to share similar ideologies and practices regarding order, planning, neatness, handling of money, punctuality and other related issues but to a different degree. The mean scores for cohabitants and marrieds in this dimension were 5.3 and 6.2 respectively.

Cohabitation is far from 'liberal', at least as far as organisation is concerned. This is demonstrated also in the distribution of household tasks in cohabitation and in marriage. Cohabiting females seem to perform household tasks which are usually thought to be traditionally 'female', and cohabiting males do very little to go beyond their traditionally 'male' tasks. This traditional role distribution of cohabiting partners seem to be common in other countries too. Stafford et al (1977) for instance, reported about the traditional patterns of family arrangements adopted by cohabitants; in another study Croake et al (1974) stated that cohabiting women still perform traditional sex roles and are dependent on the males.

3(b) Control - Cohabiting and married couples employ some forms of control mechanisms to maintain an equilibrium in their system and to make their relationship possible. In this section the question is about the type of control systems employed by these two groups and the ways, rules and procedures used to establish the type of life which is considered for them to be ideal.

The FES items concerned with this issue are related to whether family members are ordered around in some way, about the rules which govern interpersonal relationships, about the person who makes most of the decisions, the ways of doing things at home, the significance of following the rules, equality or inequality of the partners in decision making, the degree of freedom to do the things one wants to do, the degree of flexibility of household rules, and the chance of getting away with much in the system under discussion.

The results of the present study show that both systems demonstrate a variety of patterns of control ranging from authoritarian to democratic and from patriarchal to matriarchal. The majority of the respondents seem to be egalitarian, in marriage and in cohabitation. The second large group is controlled by the male. The proportion of units which are reported to be dominated by the female is relatively small.

The surprising finding of this study is that marriage and cohabitation show similar patterns of control. There were patriarchal, egalitarian and matriarchal systems of power present in both groups and in about equal proportions. Cohabitants are not more egalitarian than marrieds as some people tend to believe. They are as authoritarian and as democratic as marrieds. Nevertheless, the control scores obtained in the study are 5.0 for the cohabitants and 6.1 for the marrieds.

Similar results were produced by other studies. Stafford et al (1977) and Trost (1979) have found that there is no difference in power struggles between marriage and cohabitation. Whitehurst (1974) on the other hand argues that cohabitation can cause the establishment of the worst type of sexism and oppression of the women for men can easily take advantage of their weak and very insecure legal situation.

4. Family Environments and the Social Context

Apart from being the result of interpersonal arrangements of the partners, the family climate can be affected by environmental factors, such as socioeconomic status, educational status, type of relationship, gender of the partners, and perhaps the perception of the relationship by the partners. Although the relationship between social context and type of family environment is a very interesting issue, this paper will concentrate on the differential impact (if any) social conditions have on cohabitation and marriage environments. The basic research question here is about whether marrieds and cohabitants with certain characteristics demonstrate different or similar patterns of family environment.

4(a) Status of the Unit - The analysis of the findings shows that occupational and educational status of the partners did not have a direct differential impact on the quality of family environments of cohabitants and marrieds. Partners of same or similar educational and/or occupational status demonstrated similar degrees of quality of family climate. Nevertheless, some factors seem to cause partners of similar status to respond differently in their unit.

A factor which seems to be significant in causing a differential impact on marrieds and cohabitants is dependency. Findings of another study (Sarantakos

1984) show that marrieds and cohabitants of same class and education are not equally dependent on their partner, with cohabitants being more dependent than marrieds. Especially female cohabitants are reported to be more dependent than their married counterparts. In certain cases this dependency was caused by the lack of security and stability of the relationship, and was reported to have affected the perception of their unit and the quality of their family environment. In some cases the dependency reached an extreme degree that equalled what some respondents referred to as an 'unconditional surrender' of the female to her partner. Young trial cohabitants with children, unemployed cohabitants, and de facto females are a few examples.

This differential impact of dependency seems to be more common among the lower-class groups. Lower-class cohabitants are more dependent on their partner than lower-class marrieds, and are found to be affected by conflicts and to show less cohesion than their married counterparts. To a certain extent this exaggerated dependency of the cohabitants is caused by feelings of insecurity, lack of commitment, hostility or indeference on the part of the community, and relative discrimination experienced by cohabitants in certain areas. Furthermore, the lack of status of cohabitation puts additional stress on certain lower-class cohabitants. These factors are less common among lower-class marrieds.

4(b) Type of Relationship - Considering the type of cohabitation, the patterns of family environment were found to differ from one type to another. Trial cohabitants seem to be similar to de facto cohabitants but somewhat different from liberal cohabitants. The difference lies in the dimensions which are stressed by each group rather than in the general trend of the units. Liberal cohabitants, for instance, are more independent than the other two types of cohabitation while de facto cohabitants seem to have more conflicts than the other two groups.

4(c) Gender and Family Environment - The difference between males and females regarding their perception of their family environment has been measured by means of the family environment scale completed by the partners separately. The difference between the scores recorded by each partner indicates the degree of incongruence as well as the direction of the answers of males and females.

The study shows two trends: female cohabitants in the rule score far below the males, while marrieds score uniformly without gender differences.

The scores of the female cohabitants are finally lower than those of the married females. This consistently lower estimation of the family environment of the female cohabitants is stronger in the interpersonal dimensions and the personal growth dimensions but relatively weaker in the system maintenance dimensions. Irrespective of this the overall self estimation of the family climate of the female cohabitants is significantly lower than that of the female married partners. This may perhaps be an indication of the relative dissatisfaction of female cohabitants with their home life, which might not be as rewarding to them as it is to the males. It may, however, be an indication of an over-estimation of the real conditions of life in this life by the male cohabitants.

The cohabitation study (Sarantakos, 1984) suggests a third explanation. It is found in this study that cohabitation works usually for the benefit of the males, with the females being more likely to be exploited and to feel insecure and dissatisfied than males. This seems to justify the relatively different response of marrieds and cohabitants to their life style, i.e. that there is a greater incongruence between males and females in cohabitation than in marriage. Married wives are generally reported to feel more secure in their relationship and to view their life style as more stable than many cohabiting females. Marriage is suggested by many respondents to present an integrating factor that brings the partners together and holds them together to a higher degree than cohabitation does.

4(d) Ideal and Real Family Environments - The FES scale has been used in two forms, the 'real' form, which relates to the life of the respondents as it really happens, and the 'ideal' form, which refers to the type of family environment as the respondents would ideally like it to be. The latter type of FES scale offered some very interesting results which will be discussed elsewhere. In the context of this paper the findings of the ideal scale are used to test the degree to which the family environment of the cohabitants approximates the ideal of their life style, as against that of the marrieds. Our results are as follows:

In the first place, the mean score of the 'ideal' family environment of each group is about the same. Cohabitants as well as marrieds seem to have a similar perception of what is believed by them to be ideal in their relationship.

Secondly, the difference between 'real' and 'ideal' family environments is significantly greater among the cohabitants than among the marrieds. Marrieds seem to live 'closer' to their ideal life than do cohabitants.

Finally, female cohabitants demonstrate the largest discrepancy between the ideal and real family environments; the difference between the two scores is significantly larger than that of the married females. In both groups, but especially among the cohabitants, males show the smallest difference between real and ideal family environments.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

The results of the study suggest that, while marriage and cohabitation demonstrate some similarities in certain dimensions of their family environments, they also are different in other dimensions.

On the whole, the mean family environment score of the cohabitants (4.6) is relatively lower than the score of the marrieds (6.2). If for analytical reasons the continuum of family environment is divided into low (scores: 1-3), moderate (scores: 3.1-6), and high (scores: 6.1-9), the proportion of cohabitants with low or moderate family environment is larger than the proportion of the marrieds who fall in this category; similarly, the proportion of the marrieds who demonstrate a 'high' quality family environment is larger than that of the cohabitants.

The difference between cohabitation and marriage is more obvious in the dimensions of cohesion, conflict, moral-religious emphasis, and independence. The mean scores of the cohabitants are significantly lower than those of the marrieds. There are significantly more cohabitants than marrieds who show low cohesion, more conflicts, less (or non) religious orientation, and higher dependence. There are also more cohabitants involved in violent conflicts than there are marrieds. This finding is very significant since especially cohesion and conflicts are two elements which influence immensely the quality of life of any interpersonal relationship.

The study shows further that the discrepancy of male and female cohabitants regarding the perception of their relationship is higher than the discrepancy of the marrieds. Cohabiting females seem to grade their family climate lower than their partners do. Married females grade in the rule their relationship either as high as or even higher than their husbands do. Similarly, there is a greater discrepancy between 'real' and 'ideal' family environments among cohabitants than among marrieds. Marrieds seem to live 'closer' to their family ideals than cohabitants do. Furthermore, cohabiting males perceive their family climate as being closer to what they describe as ideal than their female partners do. Female cohabitants rate their real family environment on the average far below what they consider as ideal family environment, and seem to be more insecure, and more dependent on their partner than their married counterparts.

In conclusion, the family environment of many cohabitants is neither as 'rich' nor as 'ideal' and, in terms of mean scores, not as high as it is among their married counterparts. Especially the females seem to fall far behind not only the marrieds but also their cohabiting partners. This is suggested to be due to structural and ideological constrains of cohabitation and the nature of cohabitants. More research in this area might offer new insights in this relationship.

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FOOTNOTE

Here and in the following sections the points presented in the context of the dimensions studied correspond to the FES items as developed by R. H. Moos.

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